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THE
HISTORY

OF THE
CITY OF GEORGETOWN

BISSET'S
HISTORY
OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III.
VOL. IV.

HISTORY

REIGN OF GEORGE III

REVISION OF THE LATE WORK
BY

HISTORY

REIGN OF GEORGE III

VOL. IV

ROBERT HALL, LL.D.

VOL. IV

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
REIGN OF GEORGE III.

TO THE
TERMINATION OF THE LATE WAR.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,
A VIEW OF THE PROGRESSIVE IMPROVEMENT OF ENGLAND,
IN PROSPERITY AND STRENGTH, TO THE
ACCESSION OF HIS MAJESTY.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

By ROBERT BISSET, LL.D.
AUTHOR OF THE "LIFE OF BURKE," &c. &c.

VOL. IV.

LONDON:

Printed by A. Strahan, New-street Square,
FOR T. N. LONGMAN AND O. REES, N^o. 39, PATERNOSTER-ROW;
AND W. CREECH, EDINBURGH.

1803.

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AND W. CLARKE, LONDON.

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HISTORY

OF THE

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BY dissolving the parliament, his majesty virtually asked the question, Did your late representatives speak your sense, or not? If they did, you will re-elect them; if not, you will chuse others. Thus interrogated, the greater part of the people answered, No; and a very considerable majority of members friendly to Mr. Pitt was returned. As far as popular opinion can be a test of either

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XXXII.

1784.

Contest for
Westmin-
ster, and in-
fluence of a
beautiful
lady.

merit or demerit, it was decidedly favourable to the minister, and inimical to his opponents. The general conduct of Mr. Fox often has been erroneously estimated by those who considered defects, without comprehending the excellencies of his plans, acts, and character; but never was he less popular than after his India bill and contest with the sovereign. Still, however, he retained great favour in some parts of the kingdom, especially in Westminster, and his election was the most noted of any that occurred for the new parliament. The candidates were, lord Hood, who had so eminently distinguished himself with Rodney, Mr. Fox, and sir Cecil Wray; of whom the two last were the late members. Wray had been originally chosen through the interest of Mr. Fox, but now abandoned that gentleman and joined lord Hood. For several days, Mr. Fox was superior to either of his competitors; but his majority afterwards rapidly decreased, and he became inferior to sir Cecil Wray, who was far surpassed by the naval candidate. On the 11th day of the poll he was three hundred and eighteen behind Wray; but an interference now took place that changed the face of affairs. A lady of very high rank, still more eminent for beauty than for condition, one of our lovely countrywomen, who demonstrate that, in celebrating a Venus or a Helen, poets do not exceed nature and experience, warmly interested herself in the election of Mr. Fox, with a success far beyond the hopes of the favoured candidate. Animated by personal friendship, and inspired with an ardent zeal for what she conceived to

to be a public benefit, this exalted woman undertook a personal canvass in favour of the losing candidate, and was not to be deterred by any inconveniencies of the pursuit, or by the strictures of the opposite party upon active efforts which were so efficacious towards the attainment of the object. Many voters indeed, though far from approving of Mr. Fox's political principles and conduct, could not withstand the fascinating eloquence of so impressive an advocate; they might have resisted the utmost efforts of the brilliant genius of an Erskine or a Sheridan, but could not withstand the brilliant eyes of the duchess: these two great masters of the pathetic might have in vain attempted to canvass for their brother orator; persuasion sat on the lips and dimpled in the smiles of the beautiful Devonshire, pleading for her brother whig. Persons too callous to yield to the application of beauty, were not without other avenues to their hearts, to which the fair friend of Mr. Fox did not fail to apply with effect. The candidate himself, extremely well-qualified for co-operating with the efforts of his friends, was better known to the lower and more numerous classes of Westminster electors, than any other eminent person existing. He was naturally open, frank, unassuming, and popular in his manners, politically attended all the public meetings, and associated under the appearance of most intimate familiarity with tavern-keepers, mechanics, and tradesmen, and was, by a great number belonging to these classes, regarded with the warmest affection. He was, besides, connected with many of the principal inhabitants,

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1784.

Meeting of
parliament,
and com-
mencement
of Mr. Pitt's
efficient ad-
ministration.

whose personal exertions and influence were strenuously employed in his favour. After a contest of forty days, Mr. Fox was two hundred and thirty-five superior; but a scrutiny being demanded by Sir Cecil Wray, and granted by the high bailiff, a return was not made. The orator, however, having been chosen by Scottish boroughs, had a voice in parliament*.

The 16th of May was the day fixed for the meeting of the new parliament, in which Mr. Pitt, not twenty-five years of age, may be properly said to have commenced the chief executorial direction of British affairs. The probable conduct of a man in an office depends upon his talents, dispositions,

* The writer was one day present at this celebrated election, and being recently come to London, was forcibly struck with the free and easy terms in which some of the lower adherents of Mr. Fox, especially a party of butchers, accosted a personage of his transcendent superiority. It was not with the veneration due to so extraordinary talents from any rank, that those persons of the very humblest addressed Charles James Fox: it was in the endearing terms of fond comrades, on a footing of perfect equality: "Charles, my sweet boy; God bless your black face! do not be afraid, my lad, *we are your friends!*" The writer recollects, the same day, to have heard a very open avowal of corruption. Being in a bookseller's shop in Covent Garden, a woman, who it seems was a neighbour, coming in, was asked by the master of the house, If her husband had polled? No, she answered; we are told, votes will bear a higher price next week! The circumstances of this election, in a city wherein votes are so general, and of another in the same place four years after, are by no means favourable to the doctrine of certain political reformists, that universal suffrage would promote respectability and independence of elections.

and

and habits, combined with the state of affairs relative to his employment, and his own clear and full comprehension of its nature, objects, means, and duties. If a minister takes an exact and complete survey of the actual condition of a nation, and rises to general views of the chief constituents of national prosperity, bestowing application and perseverance either in the removal of evil or promotion of good, he must produce much greater benefit to the state, than he who regards and pursues only a part.

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1784.

The chief constituents of national prosperity are, first, the means of subsistence, through agriculture, mines, fisheries, manufactures, and commerce: secondly, defence in military and naval strength, for securing those advantages; comprehending also, connections with foreign countries, when conducive either to benefit or security: thirdly, the preservation and improvement of that physical and moral character, which is best fitted for retaining and promoting the advantages; this head requires the encouragement of useful and liberal arts, and in every civilized and enlightened country the promotion of science and literature: fourthly, the gratification of prevalent habits of comfort and enjoyments, as far as depends upon government, unless restriction be necessary for the public good, and the liberty of the subject, without which, to generous and independent spirits, no other blessing of life can afford perfect enjoyment: fifthly, subsidiary to the rest, is provision for the continuance of these, as far as human foresight can extend.

tend *. A statesman of consummate wisdom may bestow a greater or less proportion of attention on one or another of these constituents, according to circumstances ; but such a minister will have them all in his view. The peculiar situation of Britain, exhausted by the enormous expences of her late ruinous war, and loaded with an immense public debt, rendered the promotion of trade and improvement of finance the most immediately urgent objects of legislative and ministerial consideration. Besides, at this time, the study of political œconomy occupied the greater number of scholars, moral and political philosophers, and almost every able and informed senator and statesman. Such disquisitions, originating in French ingenuity, had been corrected, enlarged, and digested into a grand system, by British experience, knowledge, and deduction. Adam Smith was the framer of commercial science and the consequent inculcations ; and his estimable work, indeed, was become the text book of political œconomists in the closet, the cabinet, and senate. A very eminent writer often gives a tone and fashion to the subjects which he treats, that procures them an attention, perhaps greater than may be justified by their comparative value among the various pursuits of life

* This analysis the reader will perceive to be abridged from Gillies's *Frederic*, which appears to the author to exhibit a much juster and more comprehensive estimate of national advantage, than those, either of writers or counsellors, who should consider mere opulence, either private or public, or the aggregate of both, as the tests of national prosperity.

and constituents of happiness. Dwelling on the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, both theorists and politicians, by too exclusive attention to that one subject, have frequently been led into an imagination that the supreme constituent of national good was opulence; an idea totally inconsistent with a knowledge of human powers and enjoyments, the experience of happiness, and the history of nations *. This very high estimation of wealth, as the supreme excellence of a country, co-operated with the mercantile character, so prevalent in Britain, and many in the various departments of active (especially trading) life considered commerce and finance as the principal objects of ex-ecutorial conduct. Mr. Pitt, though too enlarged in his views to admit that opinion in the common extent, yet regarding trade, and especially revenue, as most immediately urgent in forming his plans for the first session of the new parliament, directed his mind chiefly to commerce and finance, and these constitute the principal subjects of his majesty's introductory speech to parliament.

The new parliament being met, Mr. Cornwall was chosen speaker, and on the 19th, his majesty opened the session by a speech from the throne; he declared the high satisfaction with which he met his parlia-

The king's
speech.

* Compare, for instance, the Greeks and Persians, the Romans and Carthaginians, the Europeans and Hindoos. The heroes sent by poverty from the north, to the dastardly and enervated defenders of the riches of the south. These, in the monuments of Gillies, of Fergusson, and Gibbon, shew how falsely a political reasoner would conclude, who should measure national glory and happiness by national receipts.

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1784.

ment, after having recurred in so important a moment to the sense of his people. He entertained a just and confident reliance, that the assembly was animated with the sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the constitution, which had been so fully manifested in every part of the kingdom. The objects particularly recommended to their attention, were the alarming progress of frauds in the revenue, the framing of such commercial regulations as were immediately necessary, and the providing for the good government of our possessions in the East Indies. Upon this subject, parliament would not lose sight of the effect which the measures they adopted might have on our own constitution, and our dearest interests at home. He had no wish, but to consult the prosperity of his people, by a constant attention to every object of national concern, by an uniform adherence to the true principles of our free constitution, and by supporting and maintaining in their just balance the rights and privileges of every branch of the legislature. An address conformable to the speech having been moved, a debate arose on the expressions of gratitude to the king, for having dissolved the late parliament: and an amendment was proposed, to leave out such parts of the address as referred to that subject, which was negatived by a great majority. As his majesty's speech implied a censure of the former parliament, and particularly of Mr. Fox's East India bill, Mr. Burke undertook the justification of opposition and the censure of their adversaries, and on the 14th of June made a motion for an address to the king, representing and vindic-

vindicating the proceedings of the last parliament, and criminating the present ministers. The remonstrance* dwelt particularly on the rectitude and expedience of the late East India bill, and on the dreadful consequences likely to ensue from the dissolution. . Though both the speech and proposed statement were replete with ingenuity, yet the main arguments being necessarily a repetition of what had been frequently urged before, the motion was negatived without a division. Firmly established as the minister, supported by the people through their recently appointed representatives, as well as chosen by the king, Mr. Pitt was called to exercise his talents for performing the duties of so arduous a situation. Although a year and a half had now elapsed since the conclusion of peace, the contentions of party had hitherto prevented the adoption of any effectual measures to recover the country from the miserable state to which it had been reduced by an expensive and ruinous war. Commerce was still stagnant, the national credit depressed, and the funds, after an interval of peace, at the lowest price of war; the public income, unequal to the expenditure even in its full amount, was at present greatly diminished by fraud; and our

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XXXII

1784.

* He said, he intended his motion as an epitaph on his departed friend, the last parliament; that he had, on some occasions, written long epitaphs to the memory of those that he honoured and respected; and, on the present occasion, he chose to follow the corpse to the sepulchre, and go through the ceremony of saying, "ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," in sure and certain hope, through the merit of the good works of the last parliament, that it would have a glorious and joyful resurrection, and become immortal.

important

C H A P.
XXXII.

1784.
State of the
empire when
Mr. Pitt's
ministry be-
gan.

Objects
which he
proposes to
pursue.

His first ef-
forts are
directed to
finance.

important concerns in India without any effectual plan of beneficial arrangement; the country, so situated, required the efforts of the minister to raise drooping credit; to revive the funds; to promote the just and beneficial government of India; to improve the income, by suppressing fraudulent deduction, and by positive additions; to stimulate the national industry, enterprise, and skill, to the highest improvement of our mercantile capability; and to promote manufactures and commerce, the sources of public and private wealth. Such were the objects to which, partly the circumstances of the country, and partly the prevalent opinion of the times, called the attention of Mr. Pitt, who was just commencing an administration long and important; in which the counsels and conduct of the minister, whether wise or unwise, right or wrong, stamp the history of these realms, their dependencies and connections, for the last sixteen years of the eighteenth century; an æra more awfully momentous, involving greater and more extensive interests of enlightened, energetic, and efficacious MAN, than any century in the annals of human nature.

The first ministerial efforts of Mr. Pitt were directed to finance. Before he proceeded to new imposts, or new regulations for the advancement of revenue, he attempted to render the present taxes as productive as possible, by preventing the defalcations of fraud. He had bestowed very great pains in collecting information respecting the various subjects, modes, and details of smuggling. The former ministers having also in view the suppression of this unlawful traffic, had in the last session proposed a committee

committee for inquiring into those illicit practices; three reports were delivered, containing very ample materials; and Mr. Eden, chairman of the committee, having employed his usual industry and acuteness in investigating these minute and complicated topics, had moved the following resolution, declaratory of the result, That the illicit practice had greatly increased; the public revenue was annually defrauded to the extent of not less than two millions; and these enormities and national losses merited the early and serious attention of the legislature. Soon after the meeting of the new parliament, the subjects of these reports, and of the laws in being for the prevention of smuggling, were referred to a committee of the whole house. On the second of June, the chancellor of the exchequer moved for leave to bring in a bill for the more effectual prevention of smuggling. The objects of the proposition were, to extend the bounds of the hovering laws, which had limited the distance from shore within which seizures could be made; to prevent ships from carrying arms, without a licence from the admiralty; smuggling ships once captured were never to be returned; ships of a certain description, adapted to smuggling, were never to be built; and clearances were to be regulated, so as to prevent ships clearing out in ballast, and afterwards going on the smuggling trade. In the progress of the bill, a variety of improvements were suggested; and, after considerable discussion, it passed into a law.

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Bill for the
prevention of
smuggling.

Among various articles of illicit trade, the principal commodity was tea. It had appeared before the
committee

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Commuta-
tion act.

committee on smuggling, that only five millions five hundred thousand pounds of tea were sold annually by the East India company, whereas the annual consumption of the kingdom was believed to exceed twelve millions; so that the contraband traffic in this article was more than double the legal. The remedy which the minister devised for this evil, was to lower the duties on tea to so small an amount, as to make the profit inadequate to the risk. In this trade, the rate of freight and insurances to the shore was about 25 per cent., and the insurance on the inland carriage about 10 per cent. more; in all 35 per cent. The duty on tea, as it then stood, was about 50 per cent.; so that the smuggler had an advantage over the fair dealer of 15 per cent. As this regulation would cause a deficiency in the revenue of about 600,000*l. per annum*, he proposed to make good the same by an additional window tax. This tax (he said) would not be felt as an additional burden, but ought to be considered as a *commutation*, and would prove favourable to the subject*. But the principal benefit which he expected from this measure, was the absolute ruin of the smuggling trade, which subsisted almost entirely on the profit of their teas. Another benefit would be, the timely and necessary relief it would afford to the East India company. By this regulation they

* A house (he said), for instance, of nine windows, which would be rated at 10*s.* 6*d.*, might be supposed to consume seven pounds of tea; the difference between the old duties on which, and the new duty proposed, might at an average amount to 1*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*; so that such a family would gain by the commutation 15*s.* 4*d.*

would

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would find a vent for thirteen, instead of five, millions of pounds of tea, and would be enabled to employ twenty more large ships in their service. This was the bill since so well known under the title of the COMMUTATION ACT.

Arguments
against and
for it.

Opposition in both houses denied this tax to be commutative: tea, though a commodity of general use, still was an article of luxury; whereas the admission of light into houses was indispensably necessary; and thus all persons, whether they drank tea or not, were compelled to pay a tax. The gain to the company might be considerable, but must be derived from the people, without any return; the present was a new and positive tax, and not a substitution of one for another. This bill was farther censured, as a measure of finance; tea, it was said, was a most eligible object for taxation, which produced to the revenue near a million sterling annually. If once given up, it could never be recovered, and five times the quantity of tea consumed yearly that had formerly been used, by the new duty would not produce an equal revenue. It was farther contended, that it would not affect the suppression of illicit traffic; the price of tea on the continent was $7\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. cheaper than at the company's sales, and 5 per cent. was allowed to the company: these added to the $12\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. duty, it was asserted, would be a sufficient compensation for all the risks incurred by the smuggler. Mr. Pitt combated these objections: he denied that tea was a certain and permanent object of revenue; the present state of finance and public credit did not permit him to barter a certainty for an uncertainty:

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Regulation
of duties on
British
spirits.

he was obliged to select an object on which he could build the most entire and confident expectation; and with the invaluable benefits that would result from this measure to the public, notwithstanding the industry with which popular odium was attempted to be stirred up against it, he was ready to risk any unpopularity which it might occasion. The bill was passed by a majority of one hundred and forty-eight to forty.

A third bill was also passed into a law for the regulation of duties upon British spirits, and to discontinue during a limited time certain imposts upon rum and spirits imported from the West Indies. These three bills comprehended the whole plan of Mr. Pitt upon the subject of smuggling, as far as it was now submitted to parliament. The effect of the scheme for preventing contraband trade, including several improvements which subsequent experience devised, has been almost the annihilation of that species of fraud, to the great benefit of the revenue * and of morals. The commutation act being misinterpreted and misrepresented both by ignorance and sophistical ingenuity, caused at first some dissatisfaction; that, however, was not of long continuance, and the additional duty on windows came to be paid without reluctance.

Meanwhile East India affairs occupied the attention of the minister and parliament; a committee

* Visitors of the watering-places, or other parts of the coast, who have conversed with elderly or middle-aged watermen, or any kind of sea-faring men in those places, must have perceived that they considered smuggling, heretofore their most lucrative occupation, as having received its death-blow from the hands of Mr. Pitt.

was appointed to collect information; and its report being presented, was taken into consideration by a committee of the whole house. A bill was proposed, for enabling the company to make a half-yearly dividend at the rate of eight per cent. for the year, and passed both houses, with considerable opposition in the house of lords, in which it was said that the company's affairs could not afford such a dividend *. On the second of July, Mr. Pitt introduced a bill for the relief of the company: this proposition was to allow the company a further respite of duties due to the exchequer, to enable them to accept bills beyond the amount prescribed by former acts of parliament, and to establish their future dividends. The proposed indulgence was, that the duties now due should be paid by instalments, at Midsummer and Christmas 1785. The principle of the projected accommodation, was the solvency of the company at the specified terms. Mr. Pitt, in supporting the measure, informed the house, that from the late inquiries which he had made into the state of the company's finances, and from the very ample and satisfactory accounts he had obtained, he had no room to admit the remotest idea that they would not, at the period he had mentioned, be able to fulfil every engagement. India would now enjoy peace, and parliament would enforce the active œconomy which the present state of affairs so strongly recommended; a few years of tranquillity, and a system of exertion and frugality, would render our Indian possessions affluent and pro-

* Parliamentary Journals.

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sperous. Opposition doubted the favourable prospect of the company's affairs, and objected to the relief proposed. A question was started, Whether or not parliament, by authorising acceptances of bills, guarantee'd their validity? Mr. Pitt contended that they did not; Mr. Fox that they did, at least so far as to pledge the national honour to their responsibility, by allowing the acceptance which they had a right to restrain. The sanction of parliament impressed the public with an opinion of their goodness, and established their credit. Mr. Dundas illustrated the subject, by reminding the house of the circumstances in which the restriction had originated. By the regulating bill of 1773, the public were to come in for a share in the profits of the company: in order, therefore, to prevent the appropriation of any part of their profits to the payment of bills that might be fraudulently sent over from India, it had been thought necessary to restrain the amount of those bills; consequently, when a parliament should consent to the acceptance of bills to a greater amount, it resigned, in behalf of the public, so much of the national claim to the dividends, as was secured to them by the bill of 1773. The bill passed without a division.

Bill for the
regulation of
India.

These measures were preparatory and subordinate to the bill of the minister for the government of India, which he now introduced, similar in object and principle to the scheme that he had proposed in January, but more detailed in its provisions, and more extensive in its applications. On the 6th of July, Mr. Pitt proposed his bill for the better regulation of India: in his prefatory oration he stated

stated the magnitude of the subject; and described the vast accession of power which the wealth of India had for a series of years added to the empire of Great Britain: our former opulence was owing to the prudent management of our commercial concerns; and our future hopes depended on the judicious regulations that were now to be introduced for the government of that country. The leading object was to correct and restrain abuses, remedy evils, improve the condition of British India, and thereby augment the opulence and prosperity of this country, by powers adequate to those important purposes, without being so great as to endanger the balance of the constitution. The bill undertook to institute a new system of government at home, and to regulate the different presidencies abroad; to provide for the happiness of the natives, and to put an end to their misunderstandings and controversies; to establish a new judicature for trying offences committed in India, and by strictness of government to prevent delinquency. The proposed change at home was nearly the same that has appeared in the narrative*. It proposed to leave the management of commercial affairs to the company, and to vest the territorial possessions in a board of control. Abroad, the supreme council and governor-general were to have an absolute power of originating orders to the inferior presidencies, in cases that did not interfere with the directions already received from Britain, and of suspending members of the other councils in case of disobe-

* See vol. iii. chap. 31.

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dience. The supreme government was restrained from offensive war or alliances, without orders from home; the subordinate settlements were prohibited from forming even defensive treaties, but with a conditional clause, which would render their permanency dependent on the ratification of the governor general; the servants of the company were required to transmit accounts of all considerable transactions to the council of Bengal, and the supreme council to convey speedy intelligence to Britain of every important occurrence. In considering the comfort and security of the natives, inquiry was ordered to be instituted by the different presidencies into the expulsions of hereditary farmers, and the oppressive rents and contributions that might have been extorted; and measures were directed to be employed for their relief and future tranquillity. Various regulations were added, respecting the debts of the nabob of Arcot, and the rajah of Tanjore, to private individuals and to the company. The bill further required an examination into the different establishments of the presidencies, for the purposes of retrenchment, and an annual report of the same to be transmitted to Britain. The proposition also contained both the description of delinquency, and the judicial establishments for its cognizance and punishments. Crimes committed by English subjects in any part of India, were made amenable to every British court of justice, in the same manner as if they had been committed in our immediate dominions. Presents, except such as were merely ceremonial, were forbidden to be received, unless by a counsellor at law,
a phy-

a physician, a surgeon, or a chaplain, under the penalty of confiscation of the present, and an additional fine, at the discretion of the court. Disobedience of orders, unless absolutely necessary, and pecuniary transactions, contrary to the interests of the company, were declared to be high crimes and misdemeanors. The company were forbidden to interfere in favour of any person legally condemned of the above crimes, or to employ him in their service for ever. The governors of the several presidencies were empowered to imprison any person suspected of illicit correspondence, and to send him to England if they judged it necessary. Every person serving in India was required, within two months after his return to England, to deliver in upon oath to the court of exchequer, an inventory of his real and personal estates, and a copy thereof to the court of directors, for the inspection of the proprietors; and should the validity of the account be doubted, on any complaint to that effect made by the board of control, the court of directors, or three proprietors possessing India stock to the amount of 10,000l. conjunctively, the court of exchequer were required to examine upon oath the person accused, and to imprison him until he should have satisfactorily answered interrogatories. Neglect or concealment were to be punished by the imprisonment of the defendant, the forfeiture of all his estates, both real and personal, and an incapacity of ever serving the company. For the more speedy and effectual prosecution of persons in Great Britain, charged with crimes committed in India, a court was established, to consist of three judges, no-

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ninated respectively by the chancery, king's bench, and common pleas, four peers taken from a list of twenty-six, and six commoners from a list of forty (the lists to be chosen by ballot from their respective houses), a certain number of whom should be subject to peremptory challenge both by the prosecutor and the defendant. The judgment of the court was to extend to imprisonment, fine, and incapacity of serving the company. Such are the outlines of Mr. Pitt's legislative, executorial, and judicial arrangement for the government of India.

Arguments
against the
bill.

Opposition reprobated the bill, on the grounds of insufficiency for the regulation of India, and dangerously extending the patronage of the crown. Many objections were also made to particular clauses; the new tribunal was said to be in truth a screen for delinquents, since no man was to be tried but on the accusation of the company or the attorney-general; he had only to conciliate government, in order to attain perfect security. The obligation to swear to the amount of property, and the powers granted to the courts of enforcing interrogatories, tended to compel persons to criminate themselves, and were modes of inquisitorial proceedings unknown to the subjects of this island. It was confidently denied that there was any necessity for so alarming a departure from the established principles and practice of the constitution; and it was therefore presumed that it could have been done with no other than a corrupt view, to draw the rich and powerful servants of the East India company into a dependence upon the crown for its

its protection. Mr. Fox directed the force of his eloquence against this measure of his rival. "It prepares (said the orator) feebleness at home by a division of power; if there be a receipt, a nostrum, for making a weak government, it is by giving the power of contriving measures to one, and the nomination of the persons who are to execute them to another. Theories that do not connect men with measures, are not theories for this world; they are chimeras with which a recluse may divert his fancy, but not principles on which a statesman would found his system. But, say the ministers, the negative provides against the appointment of improper officers; the commissioners have a negative, therefore they have full power. Here then is the complete annihilation of the company, and of the so much vaunted chartered rights. The bill is a scheme of dark and delusive art, and takes away the claims of the company by slow and gradual sap. The first assumption made by the minister, is the power of superintendence and control; and what is the meaning of this power? Does it mean such a superintendence and control as this house possesses over ministers? No; for this house has not the power of giving official instructions. It is to be an active control, it is to originate measures; and this is the next step. At last, to complete the invasion, orders may be secretly conveyed to India by the commissioners, at the very moment they were giving their open countenance to instructions to be sent from the directors of an opposite tendency. To suffer such a scheme of dark intrigue will be a farce, a child's play, and does not deserve the name of a government. To this

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for it.

progressive and underhand scheme, I peremptorily object. If it were right to vest the powers of the court of directors in a board of privy counsellors, at any rate it should be done openly. A great nation ought never to descend to gradual and insidious encroachment. Let them do what they wished for explicitly, and shew the company, that what they dare to do, they dare to justify."

The minister declared his conviction, that the ordinary courts of justice were inadequate to the cognizance of Indian delinquency; and that there were many crimes committed there, for which the common law had provided no redress: at the same time he did not conceive, that the principle on which he proceeded was so totally unknown in the jurisprudence of this kingdom; it was recognised in the whole code of martial law. As to the influence of the crown, he trusted he had sufficiently guarded against any such apprehensions, by the mode directed for the constitution of the new court of judicature. The whole plan was efficient to every good purpose, and guarded against the evil which must have resulted from the scheme of Mr. Fox. The bill passed both houses by very great majorities.

In the characters of Messrs. Pitt and Fox a diversity has been remarked, which may perhaps account for a striking difference in their respective systems. Energetic as Mr. Fox is in power, he is not always proportionably guarded and considerate in the exertions of his faculties; hence, though his judgment be exquisite, his actually exerted discrimination does not uniformly keep pace with the strength of his invention: Mr. Pitt, on the
other

other hand, powerful as he is in force, is extremely circumspect and discriminate, as to the extent and bounds of operation most conducive to the purpose. Mr. Fox, adopting a principle in itself right, often adopts it too implicitly, and carries its application to a greater extent than the exact case justifies. Mr. Pitt much more accurately fixes the line of demarcation, which the principle with the existing case requires. The India bill of 1783, considered in relation to certain ends, was ably, skilfully, and effectually devised; but attending to efficacy, its author neglected control. The wheels strongly constructed, but wanting the drag, by the force and rapidity of their motion, might have overturned and crushed the constitution. The plan of 1784, in forming a power for specific use, guarded more cautiously against eventual abuse.

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Comparison
of the two
bills as re-
sulting from
the charac-
ters of their
authors.

During this session, the Westminster election occupied considerable attention; a scrutiny having been granted by the high bailiff, at the instance of sir Cecil Wray, the unsuccessful candidate, its legality was questioned by Mr. Fox: according to that gentleman, the election ought to have been referred to a committee, under Mr. George Grenville's bill. The discussion produced an astonishing display of legal ability and knowledge, both from Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox; when the question was put, the arguments of the former were found to have prevailed, and the scrutiny was ordered to be continued.

Debate on
the West-
minster elec-
tion.

A very humane and equitable measure was this session proposed by Mr. Dundas, indeed equally meritorious as a scheme of individual justice and national

Mr. Dundas
proposes the
restoration
of the for-
feited estates.

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A law is
passed for
that purpose.

national policy: this was the restoration of the estates forfeited in the Scottish rebellions to the representatives of the sufferers. He enlarged on the wisdom and justice of the principle, and adducing the opinion of a Chatham as an authority in favour of his arguments, he quoted the celebrated passage in one of that illustrious orator's speeches, which describes the merits of the Scotch highlanders. He drew an auspicious omen from reflecting, that the first blow had been given the proscription by the earl of Chatham; and trusted, that the remains of a system, which, whether dictated at first by narrow views or by sound policy, ought certainly to be temporary, would be completely annihilated under the administration of his son.

He made the panegyric of persons under this predicament, who had distinguished themselves in the last war. He said there was not one of those families, in which some person had not atoned for the errors of his ancestors, and spilt his blood in his country's cause; and he would boldly assert, that the spirit which had rendered the inhabitants of the highlands disaffected to the present government, had long since disappeared, and that the king had not at this moment a set of more loyal subjects in his dominions. It would be magnanimity to treat them like true and faithful subjects, and cancel for ever the offences of their ancestors; nor would the liberality of the proceeding be greater than its policy. The spirit of emigration in the highlanders was such, that nothing could extinguish it but the return of their long lost patrons, and the affection and reverence which

which the inhabitants of that part of the island felt for their natural lords. It was obvious, that a property held for the benefit of the public, was not so well managed as if possessed by private proprietors: the restoration of the estates would tend very much to the improvement and prosperity of the country. The bill experienced some opposition in the house of lords; the objections proceeded not from the substance, but the lateness of the season, and the form in which it was introduced; all these, however, were over-ruled, and it was passed into a law.

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Mr. Pitt found himself necessarily engaged in the laborious business of winding up the accounts of the war, and was compelled, by the burden of floating debt, and the general state of the national finances, to negotiate a loan, though in time of peace; but as this measure was obviously unavoidable, in order to make the terms as favourable as possible, instead of granting enormous profit to private or political favourites, he disposed of it to the best bidders. The sum borrowed was six millions: the taxes were chiefly upon articles of accommodation and ornament in dress, furniture, and equipage, or postage, by the restrictions of franking, with some additional duties on liquors. The principle of impost with which he set out, was to bear as lightly as possible on the poorer classes: besides this loan, there was a large debt unfunded, chiefly in navy and exchequer bills, and ordnance debentures. Of these six million six hundred thousand pounds were funded, and the rest necessarily deferred to the following year. On the 2d day of August, the session was ended, by a speech from the throne;

Labours of
Mr. Pitt in
investigating
the public
accounts.

Supplies.

Loan and
taxes.

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throne, in which his majesty expressed his warmest thanks for the eminent proofs exhibited by parliament of zealous and diligent attention to the public service. The happiest effects were declared to be expected from the provision made for the better government of India, and from the institution of a tribunal so peculiarly adapted to the trial of offences committed in that distant country. The sovereign observed with great satisfaction, the laws which were passed for the preservation and improvement of the revenue. He applauded the zeal and liberality with which the house of commons had provided for the exigencies of the state, though he felt and regretted the necessity in which their exertions originated. A definitive treaty, the king informed the house, was concluded between Britain and the States-general; and the aspect of affairs, as well as the positive assurances from foreign powers, promised a continuance of general tranquillity.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Britain resumes her attention to the affairs of the continent.—State of foreign powers.—Situation and views of Catharine.—Character and conduct of the emperor Joseph.—Catharine courts his alliance.—Treaty between these princes.—Catharine's invasion of the Crimea.—Seizure of that country.—Measures of internal improvement.—It is the interest of Russia to cultivate amity with Britain.—Catharine's conduct to Britain not consistent with her usual wisdom.—Reforming projects of the emperor.—Suppression of religious orders.—Schemes of naval and commercial aggrandisement.—Dismantles the fortresses of the Netherlands.—Proposes to open the Scheldt.—The emperor prefers his claims.—Arguments on both sides.—Joseph's allegations entirely contrary to justice.—The Dutch prepare to defend their rights.—Russia supports the pretensions of the emperor.—Prussia and France unfriendly to the emperor's demands.—Britain disposed to protect Holland.—Britain's speedy recovery from the evils of war.—Flourishing commerce.—Miscellaneous occurrences.—Death of doctor Johnson, and a short view of literature and science at his decease.—Improvements of the present age in natural philosophy and chemistry.—Invention of air-balloons.—Ascent of Lunardi from the Artillery-ground.—General astonishment of the metropolis at this phenomenon.

FOR the last twenty years, England had been so much engaged in her own intestine and colonial dissensions, and afterwards with the American war and its consequences, that she bestowed much less attention on the general concerns of Europe, than at any former period of her history since the revolution.

CHAP.
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Britain resumes her attention to the affairs of the continent.

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State of fo-
reign powers.

Situation
and views of
Catharine.

lution. From the commencement of Mr. Pitt's administration, while recovering her internal prosperity, she resumed her importance among foreign nations. During the remaining portion of our narrative, her interests became so interwoven with those of continental powers, that the general state of Europe must occupy a larger share of the history than has been hitherto necessary.

The empress of Russia had not been engaged in any great war since the peace concluded in 1774 with Turkey; she nevertheless was actively employed in schemes of external aggrandizement, as well as of internal improvement. Catharine's objects were to extend over Germany, and her more northern vicinity, her influence and power, so much increased by her acquisitions in Poland; on the other side to make herself mistress of the Turkish empire, through the extent of coast which she should then possess on the Euxine and the Mediterranean: in addition to her maritime territories in the north, she proposed to attain a commercial and naval eminence, proportioned to her territorial power, rapidly increase the value of her immense dominions, and become decidedly superior to every other sovereign. The end was grand, nor were the means ill adapted. At peace herself, she had carefully surveyed the circumstances, situation, and character of other states and princes. As the supreme obstacle to maritime exaltation would be Britain, the confederacy formed against the mistress of the ocean was consonant to her wishes, and, without open and direct hostilities, she endeavoured to promote its success. This naturally produced a connection between her
and

and France, the ancient ally of Turkey, the chief object of Catharine's ambition. The sagacious empress, penetrating into the characters of other princes, availed herself of either their strength or weakness, and applied to their ruling passions to gratify her own. The king of Prussia, she well knew, she never could render an instrument for effecting her purposes, though she might procure him as a co-adjutor when co-operation with Russia suited his own. She was aware that he would instantly dive into her designs, and effectually obstruct them if they were likely ever remotely to interfere with his interests. Besides, in her principal scheme, his co-operation could not directly advance her designs, even if he were so disposed. From the situation and power of his dominions, the emperor would be the most effectual auxiliary; and to his personal character, she did not doubt she could apply with success. Joseph was fond of distinction, without the means of acquiring it by great and meritorious qualities. Ardently desirous of increasing his power, without solid and vigorous capacity to gratify his favourite passion, he was one of those secondary characters, bustling, busy, and active, which in all ages and ranks have been efficacious tools, moved and guided by superior ability. Joseph, she well knew, from his power and vicinity, would be a most useful instrument in her designs upon Turkey, either of encroachment, which she at the time meditated, or of subjugation, which though at a more distant period she no less firmly intended. That she might the more readily win over Joseph to second her views, in the year 1780 she requested

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Character
and projects
of the em-
peror Jo-
seph.

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Catharine
courts his
alliance,and a treaty
is concluded.Catharine's
invasion of
the Crimea.

requested a personal conference; they met at Mohilof, and there Catharine thoroughly confirmed the opinion which she had conceived of his abilities and character, and after having impressed him with the highest opinion of her own genius and accomplishments, she appeared to make him the repository of her most secret designs. She represented to him the advantages that would accrue to both empires from a close political union; and the practicability that, by such a connection, they might share the spoils of Turkey, and each acquiring both an extensive and productive accession of dominions contiguous to their respective territories, their concert, when so increased in power, would enable them to direct the affairs of the German empire. Joseph very readily acceded, both to the expediency of the object, and feasibility of the plan. It was agreed that Catharine should return to her capital, and that Joseph, after making a circuitous tour through the Russian provinces, should repair to Peterburgh. There they more completely digested their schemes, and a firm alliance was established between the two imperial sovereigns.

Catharine found that from the late cessions in Turkey she derived great and rapid advantages; her commerce on the Black Sea daily extended its progress; the Russian vessels passed the Dardanelles, and went to traffic at Aleppo, at Smyrna, and in the Italian ports. By so great and increasing benefits, the desire of Catharine was inflamed to extend the kind of possessions from which they arose. The Crimea, so well known in ancient history and poetry as the Taurica Chersonesus, the scene

scene of exquisite tragedy, is a peninsula which projects into the Euxine from the Palus Mœotis, or the sea of Azoff. This country, celebrated for its fertility and commerce, and filled with populous towns and cities, was formerly a dependency upon Turkey, and had been, at the last peace, declared to be a neutral principality, under one of the Tartarian khans, or chieftains. The empress studiously fomented dissensions between the ruling prince and his brother, a pretender to the sovereignty, expecting that the former, whom she professed to favour and protect, would implore her assistance, and thus afford a pretext for sending Russian troops into the Crimea. The Tartar solicited the assistance of Catharine, as that ambitious princess desired. The empress, secure of meeting no interruption from Joseph, and well-knowing the feebleness of the Turks, invaded the peninsula with a powerful army, still professing that her intention was to relieve the khan. She left him the shadow of power; but taking all the substance to herself, she became absolute mistress of the Crimea. Having ascertained the success of the iniquitous invasion, she published one of those manifestoes, in which modern aggressors and conquerors render due homage *in words* to that justice and rectitude which THEIR ACTIONS are grossly violating. In this curious monument of imperial reasoning she affirmed, that her successes in the late war had given her a right to the Crimea, which from her sincere desire of peace she had sacrificed to the wishes of the Ottoman Porte; that she had proposed the happiness of the Crimeans by procuring to them liberty and independence, under
the

Seizure of
that country.

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the authority of a chief elected by themselves. But those benevolent wishes had been grievously disappointed: revolt and rebellion had arisen; to suppress which, and restore tranquillity and happiness, from the same philanthropic motives she had been induced, at a very great expence of money and loss of troops, to interfere, for the beneficent purpose of preventing the recurrence of such evils; and had undertaken, once for all, the firm resolution of terminating the troubles of the Crimea. The measures which she had employed, the manifesto farther affirmed, were also intended to perpetuate the peace between Russia and the Porte. In this bountiful display of virtue, seeking the temporal comforts of its objects, Catharine did not forget their eternal happiness, and promised her new subjects a full and free toleration of their religion. The Turks were extremely enraged at this usurpation of Catharine, but did not at that time conceive themselves strong enough to commence hostilities.

Measures of
internal im-
provement.

Meanwhile the empress was engaged in improving her own country, and in connecting herself more closely with Joseph. In pursuing the former of these objects, she promoted manufactures, trade, voyages, and expeditions of discovery; particularly for exploring the resources of those dominions which were remote from the metropolis, and not under her own immediate inspection. She endeavoured as much as possible to facilitate communication between distant parts of Russia, and especially by water conveyance. She had projected to open a navigation between the White Sea and the Baltic, by a line of canals which should join the gulph of Finland,

land, the lakes of Ladoga and Onega, and the river Dwina, and thus save traders with Archangel the dangerous voyage round Cape North; but on a survey of the interjacent country, abounding with rocks and mountains, the scheme was judged to be impracticable. She attempted to establish an intercourse between her eastern and western dominions, by opening a canal between the Pruth, which falls into the Wolga, and the Mista, that communicates by lakes with a river which falls into the Baltic, that so there might be a commercial traffic carried on between the maritime regions of Europe, and the inland recesses of northern Asia; and this great design was fully accomplished.

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The policy of Russia respecting foreign alliances, was of much more questionable wisdom, than her schemes of internal improvement. The former princes of Muscovy had uniformly cultivated a close intercourse with England; desirous of naval and commercial aggrandizement, Catharine conceived that the trade and maritime power of Britain were the chief obstructions to her own, and from this opinion rather discouraged than promoted amity with these realms. Were a person in private life to observe, that it is the interest of venders of commodities to cultivate a close connection with their best customers, he would be charged with advancing a self-evident proposition, which no man in his senses could deny, either as an abstract truth, or as a prudent rule of conduct. Undeniable as it is, yet Catharine was not guided by this principle. The commerce with England is

It is the interest of Russia to cultivate amity with Britain.

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to Britain
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essential to Russia. No merchants with smaller capitals, or less commercial spirit than the English, will or can advance such sums of money long before the period of return, to invigorate the manufactures, employ the people in a wide and poor country, and enable the small traders to bring their goods to market from remote districts. Without this application of British capital, industry ceasing to be productive, trade and manufactures would languish, and all the efforts of Catharine for stimulating the industry of her subjects, must become less valuable, in the proportion that her policy decreased the English market. Most of the articles that her dominions could supply, might be procured from America; and should repulsive conduct drive Britain from Russia into other channels of import, it would be a loss to her commerce, which from no other source she could compensate. Never could, or can, Russia profit by disagreement with England. Influenced, however, in this important instance by narrow and unavailing jealousy, instead of her usual enlarged policy, she conducted herself inimically to the nation with which it was her chief interest to maintain the strictest friendship. She continued to cultivate an amicable correspondence with France, and the closest union with Joseph, whom she ardently seconded in schemes which now occupied the chief attention of Europe.

Since the year 1781, Joseph II., by the death of his mother the empress-queen, had been the sole sovereign of the Austrian dominions; and being now free from restraint, fully exhibited that character which was before discovered by the discerning, but
had

had not yet been displayed to the world. Possessing lively but superficial talents, the emperor was extremely desirous of fame and distinction. Without original genius to concert great schemes, Joseph was the creature of imitation, and had formed himself on the model of the king of Prussia, as far as his conception of that extraordinary character reached. Among many objects which called forth the exertion of Frederic's astonishing powers, two principally occupied his attention; the acquirement of productive territories, and the improvement of all his possessions, according to their physical, political, and commercial resources, including the advancement of the general character of his subjects. His efforts ably, skilfully, and constantly directed to one or both of these objects, had been so successful as to raise Prussia from being a small and secondary principality, to the first rank among the powers of Europe. Joseph attempted both to improve and extend the Austrian possessions; his means did not, however, bear much resemblance to the designs of his archetype. Frederic directed his efforts to increase national prosperity in its various constituents: whatever opinions he himself might have formed on the subject of religion, he was far from judging it expedient to interfere with the established notions of his subjects, or to subvert any of those establishments, which, either in themselves or by habitual associations, cherish sentiments of piety, the surest sources of both the private and public virtues which exalt a people. If he was a deist, he did not apprehend that his subjects would be the fitter without religion for either defending or

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improving his dominions. Like many others of no great talents, Joseph considered indifference to religion as a source of distinction; he was ostentatious in infidelity, and wished it, under the name of liberality, to spread through his territories. One measure which he adopted, was certainly in itself equitable; he disclaimed all dependence in secular affairs on the pope of Rome: he justly deemed it totally inconsistent with the rights and dignity of an independent sovereign, to acknowledge subordination to a foreign priest. The emperor greatly increased toleration in the various parts of his dominions, and in general extended religious liberty to Jews and all other sects and denominations. So far his policy appeared wise and liberal; but counsels and acts right in themselves, may be wrong as part of a general system. The emperor was a *reforming projector*, and in the ardour of his zeal for change, very far exceeded expediency: the suppression of the religious orders, and confiscation of their property, were the principal objects of his innovating plans. In 1782, he issued imperial decrees for suppressing monasteries, convents, and every species of religious fraternities or sisterhoods, and took possession of all their lands and moveables. A commission was established for the administration of the sequestered estates and effects, which were so considerable, that the most moderate calculators supposed that the emperor could gain four or five millions sterling by the reform *. Annual stipends were

Suppression
of religious
orders.

* The celebrated Mirabeau makes the following observations upon these changes:—The internal revolutions which
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were allotted for the maintenance of the reformed abbots, abbeſſes, canons, canoneſſes, monks and nuns, which were in ſome degree proportioned to their reſpective rank and condition; but it was heavily complained, that the portions were ſo ſcantily meaſured, as to be ſhamefully inadequate to the purpoſe. A reform, involving in it ſuch an extenſive robbery, was by no means applauded by diſtinguiſhing and wiſe men, as conſiſtent with either juſtice or ſound policy. The ſpoliation rendered the whole meaſure more particularly odious than it otherwiſe might have been; and whatever means were at home employed to ſtifle complaint, they could not reſtrain the cenſure of foreigners upon the conduct of this prince. Many conceived that his object was to plunder the church; that the pillage (inſtead of being applied to any uſeful or benevolent purpoſe) was intended merely for the ſupport of his ambitious projects; and that he had concerted with Ruſſia, plans of mutual co-operation, in order to aggrandize both powers. The ſituation

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the emperor has effected in his dominions have been greatly applauded; but what a number of objections might be brought againſt theſe eulogiums; at leaſt, the panegyriſts of Joſeph the Second ought to tell us what juſtice they find in driving a citizen from the profeſſion which he has embraced, under the ſanction of the laws. I will tell them plainly, that there is as much injuſtice in expelling a friar, or a nun, from their retreat, as in turning a private individual out of his houſe. Deſpiſe the friars as much as you will, but do not perſecute them; above all, do not rob them; for we ought not either to perſecute or rob any man, from the avowed atheiſt down to the moſt credulous capuchin.

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of naval and
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ment.

of maritime Europe had afforded to the Austrian Netherlands mercantile benefit, which inspired Joseph with the hopes of acquiring naval and commercial importance. The war that pervaded western Europe had transferred from Holland to Austrian Flanders and Brabant that immense trade, which, through the canals and great German rivers, England carried on with the eastern and northern countries of the continent. The benefits which the Netherlands derived from this transit of so great a commerce, were still farther increased, by the peculiar circumstances of the naval war in which Britain was involved: attacked at once in every part of the world, England was frequently under the necessity of abandoning the protection of her European commerce, that her foreign fleets might be sufficiently powerful to cover her very numerous distant possessions; and British merchants were obliged to use foreign vessels for the conveyance of their goods. From the operation of these causes, Ostend became a general mart of all the neutral as well as belligerent states; and such an influx of trade was carried into that city and port, that even early in the war it reached a degree of opulence and commercial importance, which it never before enjoyed, or was expected to attain. The spirit of mercantile adventure was rapidly diffused through the Austrian Low Countries; the desire and hope of acquiring immense riches universally operated: Brussels itself, notwithstanding the habitual ease and love of pleasure incident to its situation, and the long residence of a court, could not escape the infection; and

and many of its inhabitants, who had never before engaged in commerce of any kind, now laid out all their ready money in building ships. The citizens of Antwerp regretted the loss of their former trade, riches, and splendor; and conceived hopes of the possible recovery of those valuable advantages. Indeed, the spirit now excited was so prevalent, that the states of the Netherlands presented a memorial to the emperor, requesting that he would take measures for the re-establishment of that port. Meanwhile the growing opulence of Ostend was immense; the limits of the city became too narrow for its inhabitants, and the buildings were not sufficient to cover the immense quantities of merchandize, of which it was become the temporary depotory: traders and speculators continually arrived to participate such benefits, and rapidly rising population was in proportion to the sudden flow of riches. Elated with unexpected prosperity, the inhabitants little regarded the circumstance in which it originated, and forgot that, as the cause was transitory, the effect was not likely to be permanent. Such was the state of affairs and sentiments in the Netherlands when the emperor arrived in June 1781 at Ostend: struck with the flourishing condition in which he found this port, impressed with the exulting hopes of the inhabitants, and devoid of that comprehensive sagacity which could distinguish between special and general causes, with the precipitancy of superficial reasoners, he concluded that the prosperity which was then prevalent must always last. In his tour through the Netherlands he bestowed the

greatest attention upon merchants, and every object connected with merchandize. Arrived at Antwerp, he in his conduct exhibited views of interfering in the navigation of the Scheldt. He went down that river in a boat, as far as to the first of those Dutch forts, which had been erected to guard the passage, and to secure to the states the exclusive command of the river; he had the depth of the channel ascertained in several places, and he strictly examined all the obstructions of art and nature which tended to impede its navigation. Joseph had also farther objects in view, which he thought the situation of Holland, weakened by her impolitic war with her natural ally, would enable him to accomplish.

At the conclusion of the succession war, as many readers must know, the principal fortresses of the Austrian Netherlands were deposited in the hands of the Dutch, for the mutual benefit and security of the court of Vienna and themselves; and while they formed a powerful barrier to cover the territories of the states, they were to be garrisoned and defended by them, and thus serve to obviate the danger apprehended from the power and ambition of France. During the weakness of Austria in the beginning of Maria Teresa's reign, she derived considerable advantages from this treaty; but now that he was become so powerful, the emperor thought himself fully competent to protect and defend his own dominions, and, being master of great armies, he conceived that he did not want fortresses to impede the progress of an enemy.

Thinking

Thinking it derogatory to his own honour, as well as to the dignity and power of the empire, that a great number of his principal cities and fortresses should be garrisoned, and at his own expence, he proposed to resume the barrier. To justify the intended measure, he stated that, in the last war between Austria and France, the Dutch had shewn themselves incapable of maintaining the fortresses; that, besides, the state of affairs was now so entirely altered, that none of the causes or motives which originally operated to the establishment of the barrier, any longer existed. France, instead of being the common enemy, as then, was now the common friend of both parties; her ambition was no longer dangerous, and if it were, was directed to other objects; the emperor and she were mutually bound in the strictest and dearest ties of friendship and blood. On the side of Holland, it was alleged that Austria was indebted to Britain and the States-general for the possession of the Low Countries; and that, as these were the great leaders in the succession war, they compelled France and Spain to cede the Netherlands to Austria. The settlement of the barrier was the only compensation to Holland for all these services, and her immense expences of blood and treasure, to place the grandfather of the present emperor on the throne of Spain. Besides, being a direct breach of treaty and violation of faith, the proposed measure would be a shameful dereliction of every sense of past service and obligation; and the season chosen for its accomplishment, under the present embarrassed
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and depressed state of the republic, would render it still more disgraceful. These arguments, however strong, were of little avail against the power of Joseph; and the Dutch were compelled to yield. The emperor dismantled the fortresses; and thus Holland, through her folly in going to war with England, was stripped of her barrier, for which she had often and vigorously fought. Her most valuable resources being exhausted by war, that unhappy country had the additional calamity of being torn asunder by factions; peace had neither restored vigour and unanimity at home, nor reputation and importance abroad: on the contrary, their civil dissensions were every day increasing in magnitude and virulence. The faction hostile to the stadtholder, and connected with France, was now become so strong, that no sufficient counterpoise remained in the state, to restrain the excess and violence incident to the predominance of political parties. The emperor made various claims upon the Dutch frontiers, and did not want pretexts that gave a plausible colouring to meditated injustice. But of all his claims, the most distressing to Holland were the claims upon the city and country of Maestricht, the entire and free navigation of the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and a free and uninterrupted commerce to the factories of Holland in both the East and West Indies. The Dutch alleged, that the emperor claimed all the benefits which were derived from their colonies in the New World, and their conquests and settlements in the East, being the fruits of much hard adventure, great risque, and advance of treasure,
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of numberless treaties and negotiations, and of many severe wars through the course of near two centuries. The rights of the republic, and particularly her exclusive sovereignty of the Scheldt, had been confirmed, and guarantee'd to her by all the treaties which secure the political existence of Europe. The claim upon Maestricht was founded upon obsolete pretences; important as the place was, however, it was only a matter of secondary consideration, and altogether subordinate to the Scheldt. The assertion of the emperor was founded on what he called the natural rights of countries to the navigation and benefit of a river which ran through his territories; whereas the possession of Holland rested on positive and specific compact. A recurrence to the original rights of man, the Dutch justly contended, would destroy those social agreements between individuals and political conventions, which constitute and secure all private and public property. Such a principle, practically admitted, would unloose every bond that unites mankind, throw them into a state of nature, and render the world a chaos of confusion and disorder. However just these arguments were, the emperor paid no regard to reasoning so opposite to his ambitious views. He saw in several concessions the fears of the Dutch, and trusted that their dread of his power would make them desist from the maintenance of their own rights. The moral principle, indeed, of his conduct was very simple: the Dutch are weak, I am strong; I intend to rob them of their property, and they will be afraid to resist. In this belief, he tried the experiment, by equipping two

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two vessels, of which one was to proceed down the Scheldt from Antwerp to the sea, and the other up the river from the sea, on its course from Ostend to that city. The captain of the former of these was furnished with written orders from the emperor, commanding him to proceed in the brig *Louis*, from Antwerp along the Scheldt into the sea, and expressly forbidding him and his crew to submit to any detention, or to any examination whatever from ships belonging to the republic, which he might meet in the river, or in any manner acknowledge their authority. The imperial ship passed the *Lilu* and some other forts without examination, but falling in with a Dutch cutter that sent a boat with an officer to the vessel from Antwerp, the imperial captain told the Dutchman, THAT HE WAS ON HIS PASSAGE TO THE SEA; and that his instructions forbid his holding any parley whatever with the officers or ships of the United Provinces. The cutter now coming up to the brig, the imperialist quoted the instructions of his master, and refused to give any further satisfaction, persevering to sail towards the sea. The commander of the cutter entreated, threatened, and employed every means to induce the other to desist from conduct which would necessarily bring the affair to a crisis; but finding his efforts unavailing, he determined to prevent such an unjust and insolent usurpation. He fired first powder without ball, but at length poured a broadside, and threatened with the next discharge to sink his opponent if he continued refractory: the imperialist, seeing it was vain to contend, relinquished his object. The ship from Ostend was no less disap-

disappointed in the expectations of getting undisputed up the river. The emperor pretended to consider this spirited defence of their own right, as an aggression on the part of the Dutch. The imperial ambassador was recalled from the Hague, and an army of sixty thousand men was under orders and in preparation for marching from the Austrian hereditary dominions to the Netherlands. The troops which were already there, amounted to about sixteen thousand men; great trains of artillery, and all the other apparatus of war were in motion. Exhausted as they were by the war with England, the Dutch made very vigorous preparations; they employed agents to hire troops from Germany; and at home they exerted themselves in recruiting the troops, strengthening the frontiers, and putting the posts and garrisons in the best posture of defence. They prepared for the last refuge which the nature of their country peculiarly afforded, and resolved to open the dykes and lay the Flat Countries under water. While they were thus making provisions for hostility, they endeavoured to appease Joseph by reasonable and equitable expostulation; though they were very far from being disposed, they said, to go to war with the emperor, they were bound by all the laws of nature, of nations, of justice, and of reason, not to permit a violation of their dearest and most incontrovertible rights.

Russia was at this time closely connected with the emperor, and though she had lately fought the alliance of Holland, and made the republic the tool of her ambition in the armed neutrality, she now warmly and openly seconded the pretensions of Joseph.

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seph. Catharine, in a letter to the king of Prussia, roundly asserted that the Dutch were in the wrong, and the emperor equally just, moderate, and disinterested. The amount of her reasoning was, that the law of nature gave the Austrian Netherlands the exclusive right of the navigation of the Scheldt, and that the Dutch, in quoting specific treaties to support their claims, manifested an avidity which was notorious and blameable in every respect. Nothing well founded (she said, in the conclusion of her letter) can be alleged in favour of Holland; therefore she merits no assistance from any foreign power. The consequences which these republicans are drawing upon themselves by their obstinacy, must be submitted to the moderation of the emperor alone: I am firmly resolved to assist his pretensions with all my land and sea forces, and with as much efficacy as if the welfare of my own empire was in agitation. I hope that this declaration of my sentiments will meet with the success which our reciprocal friendship deserves, and which has never been interrupted*. These maxims of imperial ethics were not more contrary to the moral judgment of impartial individuals, clearly apprehending and fairly estimating right and wrong, than the imperial politics of both the sovereigns were to the obvious interests of neighbouring potentates. The king of Prussia, it was foreseen, would not be an idle spectator of such an accession accruing to his rival. France, for her own security, would protect Holland against so formidable

* See translation of this Letter in the State Papers, 1784, page 352.

a neighbour, and was not without farther inducements to oppose the emperor, even should actual hostilities be the consequence. To the arms of France the rich provinces of the Low Countries were most likely to have recourse, especially now that the fortresses on the barrier were demolished. Notwithstanding the affinity between the royal families of Vienna and Versailles, his most Christian majesty made very pressing remonstrances to the emperor; he justified the conduct of the Dutch, and urged his imperial majesty not to persevere in violating these important rights, which were so solemnly secured; he hoped the emperor would desist from efforts, which would cause so general an alarm among his neighbours; and other powers would think themselves obliged to take such precautions and measures as circumstances and events might require. The king himself must, in that case, be under the necessity of assembling troops on his frontiers, and could not, by any means, be indifferent to the fate of the United Provinces, nor see them attacked by open force in their rights and possessions. The remonstrances of France made no impression upon the emperor; he considered the free navigation of the Scheldt as an incontrovertible right, which was subject to no discussion or question. The Netherlands was fast filling with his troops, and winter only retarded hostile operations.

Great Britain observed all those proceedings with a watchful eye, but did not commit herself by any hasty declaration. The views of the British cabinet were great and extensive; it was planned, to secure Holland from the aggressions of her

Britain is disposed to protect the rights of Holland.

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her neighbours, and to detach her from a connection with France. This project, however, was then only in contemplation, being by no means fit for execution.

Britain was now recovering fast from the distresses of the war; trade was reviving; by the prevention of fraud the revenue was becoming much more productive; and industry and enterprise were again roused by the rekindled hopes of success. So lately drooping, this country now raised her head; a benignant season added to the improvements of her condition, and in present comfort the people soon forgot recent distress: prospects of returning prosperity opened, and the people were satisfied with government, whose measures they expected would greatly increase and accelerate private and public prosperity. The great demands of our distant possessions, precluded during the war from regular and sufficient supply, afforded a very large vent for the productions and acquisitions of British industry and skill. The Americans too, communication being again opened, eagerly flocked in quest of British wares, the superior excellence of which, compulsory disuse had only imprinted the more deeply on their minds. The restored islands of the West Indies furnished a considerable market for our commodities; the want of which, while under the dominion of our enemies, they had so sensibly felt. The settlements also which remained in our possession, had been but sparingly provided while hostile fleets hovered on their coasts, and not yet having fully recovered from the scourge of the hurricanes, called for a great portion of our merchandize.

dize. Of our foreign settlements, the chief vent after the peace was the East, in which the supply had not been by any means so liberal as the wants of British India required ; but during this, and some years after the war, the outward trade of the company very far exceeded the usual periods of peace *. Our commerce with our late maritime enemies of Europe revived, although it was easily seen that systems might be formed, respecting every branch of trade, which would render them much more productive.

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This year England lost one of the brightest ornaments that had graced her literary annals during a century, with which he was almost coëval. In December 1784, died Dr. Samuel Johnson, in the 76th year of his age, after a long and tormenting illness, which he bore with fortitude and resignation, worthy of his other virtues. Literary history affords few instances of such a combination of intellectual and moral qualities as constituted the character, and prompted and guided the efforts, of Samuel Johnson. An understanding perspicacious, power-

Miscellaneous occurrences.

Death of Dr. Johnson, and a short view of literature and science at his decease.

* This great and general benefit to skilful and judicious adventurers, as well as to the public, was attended with partial evil, in the ruin of those traders, who did not distinguish the real nature of the case, and who confounded temporary with general causes. Finding that very large profits had been made by a variety of articles during the first voyages after the war, not a few of the company's officers in the shipping service, and their connection at home, carried out investments of the same kind, until they glutted the market and lost their former profits, and from their misjudging eagerness of avarice completely defeated their own purposes and became bankrupts ; but skilful and able traders continued to realize fortunes.

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ful, and comprehensive; an imagination vigorous, fertile, and brilliant; and a memory retentive, accurate, and stored with valuable knowledge, were uniformly directed to render mankind wise, virtuous, and religious. The most successful and beneficial exertions of this illustrious sage were exhibited, in philology, criticism, biography, and ethics. On subjects of language, Johnson displayed science as well as knowledge; he not only collected usages, but investigated principles; applying and modifying general analogies, according to the circumstances of the particular cases, he extremely enriched the English tongue, and improved it in precision and force. The style which his precept and example formed, bore the stamp of his mind and habits, being less distinguished for elegance and delicacy, than for perspicuity and strength: his expression, however, was perhaps not the most useful as a general model, because its excellence depended on its conformity to his vigorous sentiments and thought. Since the time of Aristotle few have equalled Johnson as a critic, either in principles of estimation, or in actually appreciating defect and excellence. Surveying models rather than considering ends, many critics of distinguished acuteness and knowledge of literature conceived that meritorious execution consists in resemblance to certain celebrated performances; but these, justly and highly applauded, do not include every possible means of deserving applause. Disregarding mere usage and authority, Johnson followed nature and reason: in rating the value of a Shakespeare, he did not esteem the mode of Grecian
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arrangement the criterion of judgment, but the exhibited operation of passion, sentiment, and character, and its conformity to real life. He estimated works of imitation by their likeness to originals, combined with the importance of object and difficulty of delineation. As a biographer, Dr. Johnson is unequalled; he indeed possessed the highest requisites for that important species of writing: he thoroughly knew the constitution and movements of the human understanding and will; was intimately conversant with the kind of circumstances in which his subjects acted; and the usual and probable operation of such causes: he completely knew their individual history, comprehended their character, and had the power of clearly conveying to others, and forcibly impressing, his thoughts, opinions, and conceptions. Though the most valuable ethics are diffused through all his works, yet two of his productions are more peculiarly appropriated to those subjects. His Rambler shewed more of man in his general nature, as he himself says of Dryden; his Idler, as he says of Pope, more of man in his local manners. His Rambler was the work of a profound, comprehensive philosopher; his Idler, of genius and learning experienced in life: the former describes men as they always are, the latter as they then were in England. It may be easily and obviously objected to the political writings of Johnson, that they were by no means equal in either knowledge or wisdom to his other productions. A whig zealot might exclaim against the high-church bigotry, theological intolerance, and arbitrary politics of this great man, as a tory zealot

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might deprectate Milton, because a puritan and republican; but the impartial observer, making allowance for human infirmities, will see prejudices and unfounded opinions totally outweighed by transcendent excellencies. The historian of the present reign, if he narrate the truth, after balancing the good and the bad, must admit that few either lived or died in it of such great and beneficially directed wisdom as Samuel Johnson. Besides the vast accession of knowledge and instruction accruing to mankind from the individual efforts of this extraordinary man, his conversation and writings stimulated and formed many others to meritorious compositions. The disciples of the Johnsonian school, whatever might be their several diversities of ability and character, have written to promote religion, order, and virtue. Having made such important additions to the general mass of information and instruction, he taught by precept and example the most efficacious processes of reasoning, and the surest test of truth; he exhibited the close connection between clearness of conception and precision of expression, and afforded materials and principles of thought and judgment, with directions and examples for estimating fairly, and conveying ideas and sentiments with clearness, force, and effect. Scholars of moderate talents, who neither evince depth of reflection, vigour of invention, or brilliancy of fancy, are now accurate composers, and competent estimators of literary merit. Through Johnson, respectable mediocrity of ability and learning has been prompted and enabled to direct its patient and industrious efforts to the useful purposes, not only of just criticism, but loyal

loyal and patriotic, virtuous and religious, inculcation. Perhaps, however, the literary efforts of Dr. Johnson may have been more beneficial to other writers, than to his own particular associates; from the latter, they come to the world tinged with his particular prejudices; among the former, they have often diffused unalloyed portions of his general wisdom and virtue.

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As the death of Dr. Johnson is an epoch in the literary history of the times, it may not here be unseasonable to give a short sketch of literary efforts at this period. The American war had produced a vast multiplicity of political pamphlets, of which, though the greater number were of only a temporary interest, yet some, from the ability of the writers, the importance of the principles, and the receptions of the doctrines, were of much more permanent consequence. Two men of considerable talents and high reputation engaging in this controversy, broached opinions of a very unconstitutional tendency: these were, Doctors Richard Price and Joseph Priestley, gentlemen who from nature and study possessed the means of promoting, to a great extent, the benefit of society, were disposed to use their talents for those meritorious purposes, and had actually employed them with very great success, in certain paths, to the good of mankind; yet were now active in exerting them in pursuit of objects, or at least in inculcating doctrines of a very injurious tendency to the existing establishments. With genius competent to any subject of literary or scientific investigation, and

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deeply skilled in calculation, Price had peculiarly distinguished himself by inquiries into population, and by financial research. Priestley, by his discoveries in chemistry, electricity, pneumatics, and subjects relative to these, had made valuable additions to physical knowledge and science, both for theoretical contemplation and practical use. These two philosophers were dissenters, and dissenters of a class which has generally carried dissent beyond theological opinions, and has incorporated politics. Men, at once able and ambitious, if they happen to find themselves in a minority, very naturally seek to render that minority a majority. In situations of peace by making converts, as in situations of war by making conquests, aspiring leaders seek power. From calculations and from chemical researches, Doctors Price and Priestly betook themselves to politics, and to theological controversy, which was intended to minister to politics; adopted the visionary theories which the profound wisdom of Locke had not prevented from pervading his opinions in politics, with many of the hypothetical comments which had joined them in the course of the century: these they inculcated as the just conclusions of political wisdom, and the proper rules for political conduct. Besides the treatises already mentioned, they published various works, which refined on Locke's fiction of a social compact, and represented every system of government as necessarily bad, that had not originated in a convention of men assembled for the purpose of forming a constitution; consequently, as no existing government

vernment had been so constituted, concluding that every established polity was necessarily unjust. So far as these speculations were merely exercises of metaphysical ingenuity, they might be accounted innocent pastimes; but whether intended or not to be harmless, they certainly were not designed to be inefficient; they were most industriously circulated by the secondary instruments, which, in the literary as well as the political world, are in such numbers ready to repeat even the errors of conceived genius; and by the authors themselves, among those who were most disposed to take their assertions as arguments. Price, though constant in his principle, was more desultory and occasional in his operations: eminent in certain departments of learning, Priestley had attempted to grasp at every subject of human knowledge, and, in the midst of his endeavours at universality, directed his principal efforts towards one great object, the subversion of the ecclesiastical establishment. It is now obvious, by considering the whole series of his conduct, that he had early formed the design of overturning our hierarchy, which he himself afterwards acknowledged with triumphant exultation for the imagined success. Priestley appeared to have proceeded on the following principle: "I, and a minority of this nation, do not approve of any establishment, especially of the church of England, her constitution and doctrines, supported by the majority of the nation; as we, a *smaller number*, with *not more* than our own proportion of ability and property, cannot agree with the GREATER NUMBER, we must

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make THEM agree with our creed *.” Seeking the downfall of the church, Dr. Priestley formed a plan, consisting of two parts; the first to attack the articles of her faith, the next the muniments of her establishment. The former part of his scheme, which was indeed preparatory to the latter, at present chiefly engaged his attention. For several years he had been strenuously labouring to overturn the Christian doctrine of the Trinity; this being an article of faith, which the greater number of Christians, and especially those of the church of England, deem essential to the gospel, and consequently to every establishment by which the gospel is cherished. An attack upon so fundamental a part of our religion, was by no means an impolitical movement; nor was it carried on without great dexterity. In adducing the common arguments of often exploded sophistry, his genius gave to triteness a colour of originality, and to superficial declamation an appearance of profound reasoning, which, on many even of those not borne down by the authority of his name, made a very strong impression. While the generalissimo of heresy was himself thus employed, he had distributed his officers and troops with great skill in differ-

* It must be admitted by any liberal friend of the church, on the one hand, that if Dr. Priestley conscientiously intended the temporal and eternal happiness of his countrymen, and not his own aggrandizement, he was morally justifiable; but a liberal dissenter, on the other hand, must admit, that all those whose opinion was different, whether moralists or statesmen, were equally justifiable in impugning his arguments and repelling his attacks.

ent posts and positions, according to his knowledge of their ability, skill, and zeal for the cause. Our ecclesiastical establishment, however, did not want a defender, who was at once ardent, able, and well-provided with the means of guarding the church against the assailant. Dr. Samuel Horsley brought an acute and powerful mind, disciplined and formed by science, and stored with general and theological learning, to support the faith which he had embraced, and the venerable body of which he was a member. The Unitarian controversy, which for several years maintained by misconstruing ingenuity, and re-assertion of often-confuted arguments; by obstinate iteration of sophistry on the one hand, and on the other, by plain interpretation, deductive reasoning, fair inference, and firm adherence to positions so founded; now occupied a great share of lettered efforts and attention *. Controversies arising from some parts of Gibbon's history were also very prevalent: the author, however, engaged little in the disputes; he was persevering in his able, learned, and approved work, in which, though the pious must disrelish the antichristian tendency of several parts, and the acute may discover assertion without proof adduced to support favourite notions, yet every reader of judgment, comprehension, and philosophical and political knowledge, must allow that it is an illustrious monument of industry and genius, which lightens readers through the darkness of the middle

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* The Reviews of these years had more than one half of their writings occupied either with this controversy, or the politics of the day.

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ages, and exhibits man in various stages of declining society, until he terminated in barbarism, and, regenerating, began to return towards civilization. Another history had at this time just appeared, that embraced periods much better known to every classical reader; but though it recited transactions with which every literary man was well acquainted, it presented new and profound views, unfolded causes, and marked operations and effects, that even intelligent and learned readers had not before discovered. The philosophical pen of Ferguson rendered the affairs of the greatest people of antiquity the ground-work of the deepest and most expanded moral and political science; to teach mankind that wisdom, courage, enterprize, and skill, uniformly and constantly exerted in the various departments of a political system, elevate a nation as they exalt an individual, and that folly and vice overturn the fabric which virtue and wisdom had raised. Works of an inferior species to history, though pursuing the same object, travels and voyages, much increased our knowledge of the interior and civil condition of various countries, with which our acquaintance before had been chiefly confined to geographical outlines and political relations. The travels of Messrs. Moore, Wraxal, Coxe, and others, into various parts of Europe, not only afforded amusement and entertainment, but knowledge of mankind. The voyages of the renowned circumnavigator, captain Cook, which displayed human nature in a light shewing at once its varieties and uniformity, were a pleasing and interesting accession of literary novelty.

Physical

Physical knowledge and science were making rapid advances, while, from former discoveries of philosophy, invention and experience were fast educating arts which administered to the purposes of life. Doctors Black and Watson were persevering in their chemical pursuits, and powerfully contributing to the elucidation of subjects, curious to speculative, and useful to practical men; with which, through the abilities and labours of such men, followed by many others of patient research and useful industry, who were employed in experimental detail, the public is now become so conversant.

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Improvement of the present age in natural philosophy and chemistry.

The immense improvements of the present age, in the general analysis of material substances, and particularly in the application of chemistry to the qualities of air, produced about this time an invention that astonished mankind, by an artificial phenomenon, which appeared to realize the fable of Dædalus, and to find a passage for man through the air. Eminent philosophers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries from the qualities of air had inferred the practicability of such an undertaking, but did not explore the means. The discovery was reserved for the ingenuity of two French manufacturers of paper at Annouay in Dauphiny, Messrs. Montgolfier. These gentlemen, observing the ascent of vapour or smoke in the atmosphere, concluded that the general principle was the ascent of air rarified by absorption, and that it must ascend until it arrive at air of such a tenuity as to prove an exact equilibrium. On this reasoning they constructed a globular machine of paper

Invention of air balloons.

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paper and fine silk, covered with elastic gum; in short, of the very lightest terrene materials. This ball, being about thirty feet in circumference, was raised to a considerable height, merely by applying some lighted combustibles to an aperture at its lower extremity. If so small a power of rarified air could raise such a weight, a proportionate increase must raise a proportionably greater weight; hence it was found, by extending the experiment, that a ball of linen of 23,000 cubic feet* in dimension, being moved by combustibles, would lift about five hundred weight. Montgolfier soon after presented the experiment at Paris; a sheep, a cock, and a duck, were placed in a gallery next the balloon, and returned without hurt. On the 23d of November 1783, two human beings adventured to essay an element hitherto unexplored by man. The marquis de Lande and monsieur Drosier undertook this extraordinary navigation: at 54 minutes past one o'clock, the machine ascended into the air before an immense number of astonished spectators. When it had reached 250 feet, the intrepid travellers waving their hats saluted the wondering crowd: the aerial navigators were soon beyond the reach of discernment from the earth, but the ball itself was seen towering towards the confines of æther. The travellers having found their experiment successful, agreed to descend by gradually lessening the application of air, and arrived safely in an open

* About twenty-eight and a half, to a figure exactly cubical.

field at some distance from the city *. The event of this experiment with rarified air, encouraged farther trials; Monsieur Charles, the professor of natural philosophy at Paris, suggested the improvement of inflammable air, instead of rarified. In 1784 the experiment was tried in England by Mr. Lunardi, an Italian gentleman. On the 15th of September, this gentleman, about five minutes after two o'clock, ascended from the artillery-ground, before 150,000 people, who were collected in the places immediately adjacent: many of the other inhabitants of London and the environs were gazing from the house-tops; business of every kind appeared to be suspended, and every ray of thought converged into one focus; in short, Lunardi and the balloon occupied general conversation. The sky fortunately was without a cloud, so that his ascent above London was clearly perceived from a distance of many miles around. The balloon took a northerly direction: at half past three, Lunardi arrived at South Mimms, where he descended on a common; but again raising himself, he proceeded in the same direction, and afterwards descended at Ware †.

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Ascent of
Lunardi
from the
Artillery
Ground.

Astonish-
ment of the
metropolis
at this phe-
nomenon.

Various

* In an epilogue to a play exhibited at Westminster soon after this experiment, there was a verse containing the following pun on this *Gallic* invention:

“ Quis propria Gallo plus levitate valet ? ”

“ Who can surpass a Frenchman in appropriate levity ? ”

† The following passage is quoted from Lunardi's written account of his own voyage, observations, and feelings, when from the aerial heights he looked down upon the British metropolis:—“ When the thermometer was at fifty, the effect of the atmosphere, and the combination of circumstances around, produced a calm delight which is inexpressible, and which

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Various balloons were afterwards launched, in Britain and other parts of the world, and many treatises were published, endeavouring to demonstrate the important advantages which might arise from this invention, but none of them have been hitherto realized.

which no situation on earth could give; the stillness, extent, and magnificence of the scene rendered it highly awful; my horizon seemed a perfect circle; the terminating line several hundred miles in circumference. This I conjectured from the view of London, the extreme points of which formed an angle of only a few degrees; it was so reduced on the great scale before me, that I can find no simile to convey an idea of it. I could distinguish St. Paul's and other churches from the houses; I saw the streets as lines, all animated with beings whom I knew to be men and women, but which I should otherwise had a difficulty in describing; it was an enormous bee-hive, but the industry of it was suspended. Indeed, the whole scene before me filled my mind with a sublime pleasure of which I never had a conception; I had soared from the apprehensions and anxieties of the world, and felt as if I had left behind all the cares and passions that molest mankind." Of the second descent, he gives the following account:—"At twenty minutes past four, I descended in a spacious meadow in the parish of Stondon, near Ware in Hertfordshire; some labourers were at work in it, I requested their assistance; they exclaimed they would have nothing to do with one who came in the devil's house! and no intreaties could prevail on them to approach me. I at last owed my deliverance to the spirit and generosity of a female; a young woman took hold of a cord which I had thrown out, and calling to the men, they yielded that assistance to her request, which they had refused to mine. A crowd of people from the neighbourhood assembled, who very willingly assisted me to disembark."

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Meeting of parliament.—Consideration of the Westminster scrutiny.—Debts of the Nabob of Arcot.—Mr. Burke's speech on the subject.—Mr. Pitt's plan of parliamentary reform—introduced into parliament—negatived by a great majority.—State of Ireland.—Propositions of Mr. Pitt to settle trade on the basis of mutual reciprocity.—Resolutions for that purpose.—Additional propositions.—Petitions against them.—After considerable modification they are passed into a law.—Sent over to the Irish parliament.—Messrs. Flood and Grattan oppose the propositions.—Their eloquence stirs up their countrymen to rage and indignation.—They are abandoned by the British government.—Their real merit.—Mr. Pitt's statements of finance, and intimation of a plan for paying the national debt.—The session rises.—Affairs of Europe.—Designs of the emperor upon Bavaria—supported by Russia—opposed by Prussia and Hanover.—France, though in alliance with Austria, adverse to Joseph's ambition.—The emperor relinquishes his designs upon Bavaria.—Abandons the navigation of the Scheldt, and concludes peace with Holland.—Treaty between France and Holland.—Internal state of France.—Projects for diminishing her enormous debts.—Theories of the philosophical economists.—Influence the practice of politicians and statesmen.—Multiplicity of ingenious writers.—Votaries of innovation.—Doctrines of Voltaire and Rousseau regarded with enthusiastic admiration.—Prevalence of infidelity.—Great and increasing prosperity of Britain.—Confidence of the monied interests in the talents and integrity of Mr. Pitt.—Supporters of the Minister.—Butts of opposition, wit, and satire.—The Rolliad and birth-day odes.—Question of literary property.—Return of Mr. Hastings.—A great subject of temporary literature.

PARLIA-

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Meeting of
parliament.

PARLIAMENT met on the 26th of January 1785, and the chief object recommended by his majesty to the attention of the legislature, was the adjustment of such points in the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, as had not before been arranged. The success attending measures which were embraced in the last session for the suppression of smuggling, would encourage them to persevere in their application to those important concerns; they would also consider the reports suggested by the commissioners of public accounts, and make such regulations as might appear necessary in the different offices of the kingdom. Notwithstanding the dissensions on the continent, his majesty continued to receive assurances from foreign powers of their amicable disposition towards this country.

The earl of Surrey opposed the address, or rather objected to it on account of what he conceived to be wrongly omitted; especially because no mention had been made of the reduction of the army. Lord North, conceiving parliamentary reform to be intended by one commendatory expression, declared his sentiments very strongly against any alteration of the constitution; and Mr. Burke blamed the total silence relative to the affairs of India. Mr. Pitt replied to the objections; the observations on the reduction of the army were premature, until the supplies of the year should be before the house: parliamentary reform was a subject of the highest importance, but at this early period of the session it was impossible to state his plans specifically: all his ideas were not yet thoroughly

roughly matured ; the subject comprehended a great variety of considerations, and related to essentials and vitals of the constitution ; it therefore required considerate and delicate attention ; and though it was a path which he was determined to tread, he knew with what tenderness and circumspection it became him to proceed. There was not a general debate, and the address was carried without a division.

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The scrutiny of the Westminster election was again brought before the house in the month of February. Mr. Fox had contended, that the election ought to be tried by Mr. Grenville's act, and had imputed the perseverance in the scrutiny to the persecuting spirit of the minister. Mr. Pitt argued, that Mr. Grenville's act was for trying elections virtually made, but that there being no return from Westminster, the law in question was not applicable : a scrutiny had been demanded by one of the candidates, the returning officer had complied, as official duty required ; far from having any personal motives to promote a scrutiny, the very reverse was the case ; it would have been more convenient and easy for ministers to have suffered Mr. Fox to take his seat without question, but instead of attending to their own accommodation, they had consulted the rights of the electors, and the purposes of substantial justice. The house continued in the same opinion as to the legality of the scrutiny ; but finding in its progress that, though there were objectionable votes on both sides, a majority, nearly the same in proportion as at the close

Consideration of the
Westminster
scrutiny.

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Debts of the
nabob of
Arcot.

of the poll, remained in favour of Mr. Fox, they judged it expedient and equitable to direct the high bailiff to make a return; and the following day that officer returned lord Hood and Mr. Fox.

On the eighteenth of February the nabob of Arcot's debts to Europeans were the subject of parliamentary discussion. In Mr. Fox's India bill the new commissioners had been instructed to examine into the origin and justice of the claims; by Mr. Pitt's law the examination was appointed, but referred to the court of directors, who were to enjoin their presidencies and servants to enquire into the case, and in concert establish a fund from the nabob's revenue, for the discharge of the debts which should be found just, that they might be liquidated according to the respective rights of priority of the several creditors, and consistently with the rights of the company, and the honour and dignity of the nabob. Conformably to this clause, the directors had prepared orders; but after inspection, the board of control rejected them, and gave new instructions, which admitted the greater part of the debts to be just, assigned a fund from the revenues of the Carnatic for their discharge, and established the priority of payment among the several classes of creditors: these directions had been publicly read at a meeting of such creditors as were in England. Motions were made in both houses, that copies of the letters or injunctions issued by the court of directors might be produced; the object of this requisition was to prove, that the board of control, in *originating* the contrary order, had departed from the

the exprefs purpose of their institution, and had violated the act of parliament. Mr. Fox having opened this fubject in the houfe of commons, and affuming the pofition that was to be proved, expatiated with copious eloquence on the arbitrary power which was ufurped by the board of control, and the mifchievous confequences that the prefent act muft produce to the interefts of the Carnatic, and of the India company. Mr. Dundas argued from the act of parliament, that the power exercifed was not an ufurpation, fince, by the ftrict letter of the ftatute, the board was enabled to originate orders in cafes of urgent neceffity, and to direct their tranfmiffion to India. In the prefent exercife of that power, the board of control had acted upon the moft complete information that could be received, and had directed the arrangement in queftion, on finding it the moft fair and juft to all the parties concerned. It was expedient not to keep the nabob's debts longer afloat; the final conclufion of the bufinefs would tend to promote tranquillity and harmony, and the debtor had concurred with the creditors in eftablifhing the validity of the claims. After thefe general obfervations, he, by a particular detail of their refpective circumftances, undertook to juftify the feveral debts which were admitted by the board.

On this fubject Mr. Burke made a very long oration, which displayed a moft extenfive knowledge of the hiftory and ftate of India; but it was much more remarkable for narratives, imagery, and philofophy, to inform, delight, and inftruct a reader in his clofet, than for appropriate arguments to the

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Mr. Burke's
fpeech on
the fubject.

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point at issue, to convince a hearer in the senate, and induce him to vote as the speaker desired. The part of his reasoning that appeared specifically applicable to the subject before the house was adduced, to demonstrate that the alleged debts arose from a collusion between the nabob and certain servants of the company, who had been guilty of the most heinous fraud, oppression, and cruelty: forcibly animated and highly coloured was the picture he drew, of tyranny and suffering, guilt and misery, in British India, as the result of the alleged connivance; but since, as a chain of logical deduction, the evidence did not make out the case, the motion was negatived; and in the house of peers a similar proposition was rejected.

On the eighteenth of April, Mr. Pitt again introduced his propositions for a reform in parliament. Desirous, as the minister professed himself, of such a change in the representation as he conceived most consistent with the principles, and conducive to the objects of the constitution, he was aware of the danger of essays of reform, unless very nicely modified and circumscribed. The general characteristics of his plan for that purpose, were caution and specification: nothing vague or indefinite was proposed; no chasm was left which visionary imaginations might fill with their own distempered fancies: *thus far shalt thou go and no farther*, was obviously expressed in the extent and bounds. The leading principle was, that the choice of legislators should follow such circumstances as give an interest in their acts, and therefore ought in a great degree to be attached to property. This principle being established,

Mr. Pitt's
plan of par-
liamentary
reform,

Mr. Pitt's
plan of par-
liamentary
reform,

lished, it was obvious, that as many very considerable towns and bodies either had no vote in electing representatives, or had not the privilege of chusing a number proportioned to their property, it would be necessary to disfranchise certain decayed boroughs. In relations between government and subject it was a manifest rule in jurisprudence on the one hand, that the interest of a part must give way to the interest of the whole; but on the other, that when such a sacrifice is required from a subject, the state should amply compensate individual loss incurred for the public good. Guided by these maxims of ethics, Mr. Pitt proposed to transfer the right of chusing representatives from thirty-six of such boroughs as had already fallen, or were falling into decay, to the counties, and to such chief towns and cities as were at present unrepresented; that a fund should be provided for the purpose of giving to the owners and holders of the boroughs disfranchised, an appreciated compensation; that the acceptance of this recompence should be a voluntary act of the proprietor, and, if not taken at present, should be placed out at compound interest, until it became an irresistible bait to such proprietor: he also projected to extend the right of voting for knights of the shire to copyholders as well as freeholders. The chief arguments in favour of a reform were derived from the alleged partiality of representation; an active, reforming, and regulating policy, which kept pace with the alterations in the country, was requisite to preserve the constitution in its full vigour: when any part of our system was decayed, it had ever been the wisdom of the legisla-

is introduced
into parlia-
ment,

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ture to renovate and restore it by such means as were most likely to answer the end proposed; and hence had arisen the frequent alterations that had taken place with respect to the rule of representation. From a change of circumstances, towns which once ought to have a vote in chusing a senator or senators, now behoved to have none; and towns once without any just claim to the right of such an election, were now aggrieved and injured by the want of that privilege. The principle continued the same in both the former and the latter, but its application should be altered in a difference of case. The opposers of reform, on the other hand, contended, that no necessity had been shewn for such a change; that whatever inequalities theory might exhibit in the existing system, the people were all actually represented, as far as was necessary to their rights and happiness; that no man could be deprived of liberty, property, or life, but by his own act, whether he had a vote for a member of parliament or not; that under the present mode of representation, both individual and national prosperity had risen to a very great pitch, and was rapidly rising to a higher; that it was extremely dangerous to alter what experience, the only sure test of political truth, had uniformly shewn to be good*. The people did not want reform; the large

* Never, perhaps, were the arguments on this side of the question more clearly exhibited, than those which are compressed into a page of one of the most valuable works that can be recorded in the literary history of the present reign. Paley, in his Principles of moral and political Philosophy, resting the

large towns that were said to be aggrieved by the present state of representation had made no complaint, or sought any redress; those which were called rotten and decayed boroughs were frequently

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the question concerning representation, as well as every political establishment, solely on expediency, says, "We consider it (representation) so far only as a right at all, as it conduces to public utility: that is, as it contributes to the establishment of good laws, or as it secures to the people the just administration of these laws. These effects depend upon the disposition and abilities of the national counsellors: wherefore, if men the most likely, by their qualifications, to know and to promote the public interest, be actually returned to parliament, it signifies little who return them. *If the properest persons be elected, what matters it by whom they are elected?* At least no prudent statesman would subvert long established or even settled rules of representation, without a prospect of procuring wiser or better representatives. This then being well observed, let us, before we seek to obtain any thing more, consider duly what we already have. We have a house of commons composed of five hundred and forty-eight members, in which number are found the most considerable land-holders and merchants of the kingdom, the heads of the army, the navy, and the laws; the occupiers of great offices in the state, together with many private individuals, eminent by their knowledge, eloquence, or activity. Now, if the country be not safe in such hands, in whose may it confide its interest? If such a number of such men be liable to the influence of corrupt motives, what assembly of men will be secure from the same danger? Does any new scheme of representation promise to collect together more wisdom or produce firmer integrity? In this view of the subject, and attending not to ideas of order and proportion (of which many minds are much enamoured), but to known effects alone, we may discover just excuses for those parts of the present representation which appear to a hasty observer most exceptionable and absurd." Paley, vol. ii, p. 219.

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and nega-
tived by a
great ma-
jority.

represented by gentlemen who had the greatest stake in the country, and consequently were as much concerned in its welfare as any other representatives. Mr. Pitt's propositions were negatived by a majority of two hundred and forty-eight to one hundred and seventy-four.

Parliament was this year principally occupied by forming arrangements for a commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland.

State of
Ireland.

We have seen that, in the year 1780, the trade of Ireland had been freed from the hurtful restrictions by which it had long been shackled. In 1782, the independence of Irish parliament had been forever established. It remained for the legislature of the two countries to arrange a system of commercial intercourse, which might best promote the advantage of the two parties so nearly connected. The freedom of trade had afforded to Ireland the means of improvement; of which the success must depend on the active, well directed, and persevering industry of the inhabitants; as without those exertions, the mere exemption from former restriction could be of little avail; no effectual measures had hitherto been employed for exciting and cherishing so beneficial a spirit: the manufacturers had for some years been much engaged in political speculations, which, by abstracting their attention from their own business, naturally caused great distress; and that distress, discontent and violence. Various expedients were attempted for their relief. In 1784, Mr. Gardener brought forward a plan for protecting their own manufactures, and enforcing the consumption of them at home, by laying heavier duties on

on similar manufactures imported from other countries; he had therefore moved to restrict the importation of English drapery, by subjecting it to a duty of 2s. 6d. per yard. It was objected to this motion, that Great Britain would probably retaliate, and that Ireland might endanger the loss of the linen trade, the annual value of which was a million and a half, for the uncertain prospect of increasing the woollen, that did not exceed 50,000l. A proposition of such obvious impolicy was rejected by the great majority of one hundred to thirty-six. The populace having been ardently desirous that the bill should pass, were inflamed with the greatest rage at its rejection, and gave loose to excessive outrage. They entered into compacts not to consume imported goods, and inflicted the most severe punishment on those who either did not subscribe or adhere to such agreements: the riotous outrages of the mob rendered the interference of military force necessary, and though the soldiers behaved with all possible moderation, still in the tumults disagreeable violence took place, and Dublin was a scene of dissension. In such a situation, regard to temporary tranquillity, as well as to general, commercial, and political interest, rendered it necessary to devise some tie, that, by connecting the interests, might combine the inclinations of both countries. Mr. Pitt seeing so strong special reasons, and urging immediately what the general consideration required to be speedily effected, took measures for a commercial treaty with Ireland. Commissioners appointed on the part of the sister kingdom concerted with the British cabinet a plan for

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Propositions
of Mr. Pitt
to settle
trade on the
basis of mu-
tual reci-
procity.

Resolutions
for that pur-
pose.

for regulating and finally adjusting the commercial intercourse. The result Mr. Orde stated to the Irish parliament on the 11th of February, and moved a corresponding set of resolutions, which passed the house of commons with little alteration. The concurrence of the house of peers being soon after obtained, the resolutions, ten in number, were immediately transmitted to England, as, on their part, the proposed basis for an equitable and final adjustment. Mr. Pitt having received these assurances of the disposition of the body of the Irish parliament to settle their commercial intercourse on the basis of reciprocity, moved a resolution to the following effect: "That it is highly important to the general interests of the empire that the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland should be finally adjusted, and that Ireland should be permitted to have a permanent and irrevocable participation of the commercial advantages of this country, when her parliament shall permanently and irrevocably secure an aid out of the surplus of the hereditary revenue of that kingdom, towards defraying the expence of protecting the general commerce of the empire in time of peace." After reviewing what had been already granted to Ireland by the British parliament, he generalized his object; which was to settle commercial intercourse on the firm basis of mutual reciprocity. In applying this principle, he exhibited an extensive knowledge of the relative and absolute state of manufactures, and other materials of commerce, in both countries, and proposed a plan, under two general heads: First, Britain was to allow the importation of the produce of our colonies in
the

REIGN OF GEORGE III.

the West Indies and America into Ireland: secondly, There should be established between the two countries a mutual exchange of their respective productions and manufactures upon equal terms. The first, he allowed, had the appearance of militating against the navigation laws, for which England ever entertained the greatest partiality; but as she already allowed Ireland to trade directly with the colonies, the importation of the produce of those settlements circuitously through Ireland into Britain could not injure the colonial trade of this country. Such was the general outline of the proposed system on its first appearance. A considerable portion of the session was employed in examining merchants and manufacturers upon the various details which could elucidate the subject; and after fully investigating the evidence of the traders, Mr. Pitt, on the 12th of May, proposed twenty resolutions, containing a full explanation of the terms before proposed, and also new resolutions, which arose from the increased knowledge that had been acquired. The chief objects of the additional propositions were to provide, First, That whatever navigation laws the British parliament should hereafter find it necessary to enact for the preservation of her marine, the same should be passed by the legislature of Ireland. Secondly, Against the importation of any West India merchandizes, that were not the produce of our own colonies into Ireland, and from thence into Britain. Thirdly, That Ireland should debar itself from trading to any of the countries beyond the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, so long as it

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Additional
propositions.

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it should be thought necessary to continue the charter of the English East India company.

The propositions underwent severe animadversion against the whole system: it was argued, that the manufactures and commerce of Great Britain would be very materially injured by the establishment of the proposed regulations; the former, from the comparatively small price of labour in Ireland, which alone, it was contended, would soon enable that kingdom to undersell us at home and abroad; the latter, from the facility with which it was well known the revenue laws in Ireland were evaded. The plan was strongly deprecated by British manufacturers, and many urgent petitions were presented, praying it might not be adopted. The chief objections were made to the fourth proposition, by which it was intended, “That all laws made or to be made in Britain for securing exclusive privileges to the ships and mariners of Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and plantations, and for regulating and restraining the colonial trade, should be enforced by Ireland, by laws to be passed by the parliament of that kingdom, for the same time and in the same manner as in Britain.” The adversaries of the system asserted, that this part of the plan was a resumption of the right of legislation for Ireland, which Britain had renounced, and a proffer of commercial advantage to Ireland in exchange for her lately acquired independence: they further contended against the propositions in general, that in whatever proportion the one country should benefit from them, in the very same the other would lose. The supporters

porters of the measure argued, that it was absolutely necessary, in order to remove the discontents which at present raged in Ireland; and that unless the propositions were passed into a law, all the recent grants would prove useless, as they were evidently inadequate to the expectations of the sister kingdom. The fourth proposition was a clause which the safety of our own navigation laws made it necessary to annex to the benefits allowed to Ireland. It was not the intention of the British parliament to interfere with the independence of Ireland; all that was proposed, was a proffer of advantage from one independent state to another, on a condition subject to which, that other had the alternative of either accepting or rejecting the whole plan. The notion that, in a commercial treaty between two nations, if the one gained, the other must proportionably lose, was totally unfounded: trade between two states might be, and often was, the reciprocal exchange of surplus for supply, as between individuals; and thus both parties might be very great gainers. The relative situation of Britain and Ireland, their respective commodities and habits, were such as to afford a moral certainty of the highest benefits to both countries, from the increased productiveness of labour through the reciprocation of speedy markets. After three months had been chiefly occupied in examining witnesses, and modifying the various provisions, the propositions were passed by a large majority in the house of commons, and afterwards by the lords. On the 28th of July Mr. Pitt proposed a bill founded upon them; this was accompanied by an address to the king, in which

After considerable modification they are passed into a law.

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Sent over to
the Irish
parliament.Messrs.
Flood and
Grattan op-
pose the
propositions.Their elo-
quence stirs
their coun-
trymen to
rage and
indignation.They are
abandoned
by the Bri-
tish govern-
ment.

which both houses concurred, containing a statement of what had been done by the British parliament, and observing that it now remained for the parliament of Ireland to judge and decide upon the proposed agreement.

In Ireland national prejudice counteracted national interest. During the progress of the discussion in England, the people in the neighbouring island had expressed great dissatisfaction, which had increased, as their orators expatiated on the propositions that had been chiefly opposed in the British parliament. Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan peculiarly distinguished themselves by the eloquent harangues which stirred their countrymen to rage and indignation against Britain. Declaiming with glowing ardour against the whole system, they directed their invectives particularly to the fourth proposition, and to the ninth, which, restraining the Irish from trading to India, merely prevented them from infringing the chartered rights of the India company, and thus placed them exactly on the same footing with every British subject who was not a member of that corporation. The sentiments of the people so impressed, influenced a considerable number of the house of commons; so that when a corresponding bill was introduced, the majority in its favour was but small. The clamour against it was very loud, and petitions were very numerous. In these circumstances, it was deemed by the British legislature inexpedient to proceed any further, with overtures so misunderstood and misrepresented by the party to whom they were really so advantageous. From close connection,

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Their real
merit.

nection, Mr. Pitt had seen that very great advantages must accrue to both countries; commercial intercourse would, in addition to appropriate advantage, gradually tend to assimilation of character, and speedily produce reciprocity of interest; the result of both would be political harmony. If his propositions had been adopted, it is morally certain, that the bond of amity would have been drawn so close, as to have prevented subsequent events so calamitous to Ireland.

Introductory to financial details, Mr. Pitt this season took a general view of the state of pecuniary affairs, by comparing the public income with the public expenditure. The result of his statement and calculations was, that there would be such a surplus as would enable parliament to appropriate one million sterling to a sinking fund for the discharge of the national debt. At present, however, he had only seen the general practicability of the principle, but not having matured measures for such an appropriation, he chose to defer a specific plan till the following year. There remained unfunded upwards of ten millions of navy bills, and ordnance debentures: these were funded in the five per cents, taken at about ninety pounds, and a million was borrowed from the bank at five per cent. to supply deficiencies still remaining from the expences of the war. The new taxes were, an additional duty on male servants; a duty on female servants, increasing in a stated proportion according to the number, with a farther charge to bachelors having such servants; a tax on attornies, on post-horses, on carriages, coach-

Mr. Pitt's
statements
of finance,
and intima-
tion of a
plan for
paying the
national
debt.

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coach-makers, pawn-brokers, gloves, and retail shops; besides one hundred and fifty thousand pounds raised by a lottery. On the 8th of August, on a message from the king, parliament was adjourned to the 27th of October, and afterwards prorogued by proclamation.

The emperor and the Dutch still persevered in the contest about the Scheldt, but commotions in Germany unexpectedly arising, prevented him from bearing down upon Holland with his whole force. Joseph was become sensible, not only that other powers would not suffer him to open the Scheldt, but that his present possessions in the Netherlands were precarious; and finding one project likely to misgive, in the true spirit of an adventurer resolved to try another, by making an exchange with the elector of Bavaria, which should put the emperor in possession of the duchy of Bavaria, with all the appendages confirmed at the peace of Teschen, and make the elector sovereign of the Austrian Netherlands, which, more to render the proposal palatable, was to be erected into a kingdom. This scheme would have been very advantageous to Austria, by the accession of a large and productive country, which, surrounding and completing the Austrian dominions, would have consolidated and compacted so great a body of power as would over-balance the other states of Germany. A man of deep reflection, in the very important advantages of the object, would have discovered an unsurmountable obstacle to its attainment; that the king of Prussia and other members of the Germanic body

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body would not suffer the establishment of a power that must overbear themselves ; profound sagacity, however, was no part of Joseph's character. Ambitious in design, but fantastic in project and light in counsel, he very superficially investigated circumstances, and imperfectly calculated the probabilities of success. As soon as he had formed his scheme, he communicated it to the court of Peterburgh. Catharine, who perfectly comprehended the character of the emperor, studiously cultivated amity with a prince, whom she could render so powerful a co-adjutor to herself. She most readily acceded to hasty and ill-digested schemes for gratifying his ambition, that thereby she might prevent his obstruction, and secure his co-operation to the mature and well-digested plans she had formed for extending her power and dominions ; she also joined him in making overtures to the house of Bavaria, but these were peremptorily and indignantly rejected. The king of Prussia being informed of the proposal, made very strong remonstrances ; and having concerted with the two chief powers of Northern Germany, the electors of Saxony and Hanover, he effected a confederation for maintaining the indivisibility of the empire. The court of Vienna did every thing in its power to stop the progress of the combination, but it was joined by most of the other states, and France was known to be favourable to its object. Besides the insuperable impediments to the projects of Joseph from the well-founded jealousy of foreign powers, great intestine commotions prevailed in his own dominions ; his numberless innovations in the civil and

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Abandons
the naviga-
tion of the
Scheldt, and
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tween France
and Hol-
land.

religious establishments of Hungary and its appendages, had the usual effect of schemes of reform founded on abstract principles, without regard to the character, sentiments, and habits of the people, and produced much greater evils than those which they professed to remedy; by violating customs, offending prejudices, annulling prescriptions, and trenching on privileges, he drove his subjects to dissatisfaction, insurrection, and rebellion: to quell the revolvers required powerful and expensive efforts, nor were they finally reduced till the close of the campaign: these various causes prevented hostilities from being commenced against the states-general. Pacific overtures were resumed under the mediation of the court of France, and the management of the count de Vergennes, the French prime minister: the Dutch agreed to pay Joseph a certain sum of money in lieu of his claims over Maestricht, which he renounced for ever, and also resigned his pretensions to the free navigation of the Scheldt: less material disputes were compromised and adjusted, and a treaty of peace was concluded between Austria and Holland. Before the expiration of the year, the Dutch and France entered into a new alliance, offensive and defensive. France was internally occupied in schemes of diminution of the immense debts which she had contracted in the late war, and in the improvement of her manufactures and commerce. A merchant, raised to be prime minister, contributed to the speedy elevation of the mercantile profession in the opinion of Frenchmen; and trade, which before had been considered as derogatory to the character

character of a gentleman, was now highly respected. Numberless treatises in favour of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce, flowed from the fertile ingenuity of their writers, which, if they did not much inform or convince acute and distinguishing understandings, by striking ductile imaginations influenced a much more numerous class. The lively fancies, ardent feelings, and impetuous spirits of Frenchmen were now turned to mercantile adventure: they conceived themselves happily emancipated from the old prejudices which had kept many of their forefathers in proud poverty. On other subjects also, they fancied they had dispelled the clouds of ignorance, and were enlightened by the sunshine of reason. There was at this time a great multiplicity of ingenious writers in France, without that patient investigation, research, cautious consideration, and experimental reasoning, which only can lead to just, sound, and beneficial philosophy; to religious, moral, and political wisdom. A few eminent framers of hypotheses had given the tone to the rest; Helvetius, Rousseau, and Voltaire, taught infidelity to numerous classes of disciples, who admitted their doctrines upon the faith of their asseverations. Their multiplying votaries, professing to disregard all superstitious bigotry, were still Roman catholics in reasoning: they admitted *an infallible authority*, if not in the pope, in Jean Jacques; decrees from the mountains of Switzerland were received with no less veneration, than bulls had formerly been received from the Vatican; infidelity was become the prominent feature of the French character,

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Internal
state of
France.

Multiplicity
of ingenious
writers.

Doctrines of
Voltaire and
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Great and
increasing
prosperity of
Britain.Confidence
of the mo-
nied interest
in the ta-
lents and in-
tegrity of
Mr. Pitt.

character, and occupied the principal share of conversation in fashionable societies. The royal family, indeed, were not tinctured with the prevalent impiety, but the indulgent liberality of the monarch did not watch and rigorously check such opinions with the vigilance which sound policy required, and neither he nor his ministers appeared to be aware of the dangers attending the diffusion of irreligion through a nation.

British commerce continued to increase and extend; the flourishing state of trade, together with the announced project of Mr. Pitt for the discharge of the national debt, raised the stocks in a short time from fifty-four to seventy, in the three per cents. consolidated, the barometer of the other funds. The mercantile and monied interest, in its various departments and corporations, evidently reposed in the chancellor of the exchequer a confidence which they had bestowed upon no minister since the time of his father. They conceived the highest opinion of his integrity and talents, approved the principles on which he was proceeding, and the regulations he had actually proposed, and were thoroughly satisfied with the rapid advances of trade, as well as the increasing means of enlarging their capitals. While ministers impressed the public with a favourable idea of their qualifications to promote the prosperity of the country, the supporters of opposition were foremost in their efforts to amuse and entertain; wit and temporary satire appeared with brilliancy and force in the Rolliad, a mock heroic poem, of which the professed hero was a respectable and worthy gentleman, Mr. Rolle of Devonshire, a zealous friend

of administration, and therefore held up by their opponents to ridicule. The notes on the poem display considerable humour, and illustrate the feelings, sentiments, and opinions of opposition, concerning the general politics of the times. The death of Mr. Warton, the poet laureat, also afforded an occasion to ingenuity for exhibiting a sarcastic account of ministerial characters in the *birth-day odes*; performances satirically inscribed with the names of various gentlemen and noblemen as candidates for the vacant office, and, as in characteristic compositions, presenting specimens of their poetical powers by odes on the king's birth-day. The respective essays painted the alleged foibles of the chief supporters of the cabinet: viewed together, the Rolliad and the birth-day odes presented ministerial men and measures in the light in which the satirists of opposition at this period wished them to be beheld, and are not therefore unconnected with the serious literature and politics of the anti-ministerial party.

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Satirical
literature.

The Rolliad
and the birth-day
odes
presented
ministerial
men and
measures
in the light
in which
the satirists
of opposition
at this period
wished them
to be beheld.

A cause affecting literary property was this year determined by the court of session, the chief civil tribunal of Scotland. The compilers of the Scottish Encyclopedia had inserted in that work large extracts from Dr. Gilbert Stewart's history of Scotland, and his history of the reformation of Scotland: Mr. Stewart prosecuted them for piracy, and the transcripts being long and continuous, the court, having a power of determining equitably as well as legally, gave sentence in favour of the prosecutor, on the ground that the defenders had quoted more, and with less interruption, than was allowed by the rules of literary property. The

Question of
literary pro-
perty.

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Return of
Mr. Hast-
ings, a great
subject of
temporary
literature.

principle of the judgment appeared to be, that large and connected passages copied from a literary work, tend to injure the sale of that work, and consequently lessen the value of the property to the rightful owner.

Peace having been now completely established between the East India company and Tippoo Saib, tranquillity was diffused over British India. During the recess, Mr. Hastings, the governor-general, returned; and the periodical writings of the times teemed with attacks and vindications of his character.

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Meeting of parliament.—King's speech.—Views of Mr. Fox concerning continental alliances.—The duke of Richmond's scheme for fortifying the dock-yards—submitted to parliament—Arguments for and against.—Speech of Mr. Sheridan on the fortifications —The bill is rejected by the casting vote of the speaker.—Alteration in the mutiny bill.—Mr. Pitt's plan for appropriating an annual million to the payment of the national debt.—Mr. Sheridan takes the most active part in controverting the minister's financial propositions.—Farther measures of the minister for preventing frauds against the revenue.—Proposes to subject foreign wines to the excise.—A bill for the purpose is passed into a law.—Bill appointing commissioners to examine the crown lands.—The conduct of Mr. Hastings becomes a subject of enquiry.—Public opinion concerning Mr. Hastings.—Mr. Burke opens the subject.—His introductory speech.—Proposes to proceed by impeachment.—Presents a summary of the alleged criminal acts.—A majority, including Mr. Pitt, finds ground of impeachment in the proceedings against Cheyht Sing.—Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of British India.—Supplies.—Session terminates.

ON the 24th of January 1786, parliament was assembled. The speech from the throne mentioned the amicable conclusion of the disputes which had threatened the tranquillity of Europe, and the friendly dispositions of foreign powers towards this country : it expressed the royal satisfaction, that his majesty's subjects now experienced the growing blessings of peace in the extension of trade, improvement of revenue, and increase

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of public credit. For the farther advancement of those important objects, the king relied on the continuance of that zeal and industry which was manifested in the last session of parliament. The resolutions which they had laid before him, as the basis of an adjustment of the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland, had been by his direction recommended to the parliament of that kingdom, but no effectual step had hitherto been taken, which could enable them to make any farther progress in that salutary work. His majesty recommended to the house of commons the establishment of a fixed plan for the reduction of the national debt; a measure which, he trusted, the flourishing state of the revenue would be sufficient to effect, with little addition to the public burdens.

The objects proposed by the sovereign for parliamentary deliberation, were evidently of such primary importance, that the speech and corresponding address afforded little opportunity for animadversion from opposition. Without objecting to the address, Mr. Fox expatiated into a very wide field of continental politics. He went over the state and recent transactions of Russia, Germany, Holland, and France, and endeavoured to prove, that the accession of the king, as elector of Hanover, to the Germanic confederation, would disgust the emperor with this country, and indispose him to an alliance with Britain in any future war. Viewing the interests and relations of the various states of the continent, he deduced from them the principles of alliance which he judged most expedient for this country to adopt. From the connection between France and Spain, the

Views of
Mr. Fox
concerning
continental
alliances.

the emperor was the only power whose co-operation could occupy the exertions of France by land, and thereby prevent her from directing to maritime contests such efforts as she had employed in the recent war. An intercourse both commercial and political with Russia, was also an object of the highest consequence to this country; a favourable opportunity had been lost, but still an advantageous alliance might be concluded. He understood that a treaty was on the point of being established between Britain and France; and he strongly reprobated the policy of such a measure, appealing to the experience of former times, which (he said) proved that this nation had become powerful and flourishing, from the moment that she quitted all commercial connection with France. With strictures on the Irish propositions and the India bill, he concluded a speech, which, as usual with opposition on the first day of the session, exhibited a statement of all the alleged errors and miscarriages of ministers. In replying, Mr. Pitt made an introductory observation, deserving peculiar attention, as it very strongly exhibited a prominent feature in the eloquence of his opponent. “Mr. Fox (he said) discovered most extraordinary dexterity in leaving out of a discussion * such parts belonging to the subject as did not suit his purpose to be brought forward, and a similar dexterity of introducing, however foreign to the question, such matter as he expected would be favourable.” By reverting to the course of Mr. Fox’s oratory during the administration of Lord

* See Parliamentary Reports for 1786, Jan. 24.

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North, the reader will perceive this remark of the minister not to be groundless. Mr. Fox had often allowed himself unbounded liberty of expatiation, and roamed at large in the wide regions of invective. Lord North had most frequently followed his adversary through the devious tracts, and much time was spent by both orators in contentions on subjects which were foreign to the immediate business of the house. Forcible as Mr. Fox was in argument; dexterous, skilful, and ingenious, as lord North was in eluding a strength which he could not meet; the reasoning of both wanted closeness, and compacted arrangement: besides, as of two very able combatants Mr. Fox was incomparably the superior, lord North in his tactics naturally imitated, in order to parry his assailant. Mr. Pitt was of a different cast, and character; he was far from being under the necessity of shifting blows that he could repel by equal force, and return with well-directed effort. Disciplined in reflection and argumentation, as well as powerful in talents, he thoroughly knew his own ground, and his ability to maintain it in any mode which he judged expedient; he was not therefore to be hurried away by the evolutions of his adversary. Mr. Pitt at this time declared an intention, to which in the course of his parliamentary warfare he generally adhered, that let Mr. Fox range ever so wide into extraneous subjects, he should confine his answers to what he conceived relative to the purpose. In the present debate, he observed, various topics had been discussed by Mr. Fox, such as the politics of the emperor and the German confederacy, which were not within the control

control of the house : the treaty with Russia was in considerable forwardness, but neither that proposition nor the negociation with France were yet proper to be discussed ; objections were therefore premature, and only hypothetical concerning a subject so imperfectly known. Fox replied, by placing his former observations in a new light, without any fresh argument ; and no general debate having ensued, the address was carried without a division.

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The first important object that occupied the deliberations of parliament, was a measure which originated with the duke of Richmond, master-general of the ordnance. Intelligent and ardent, this nobleman had paid peculiar attention to mathematics, as a ground-work of military skill, especially gunnery and fortification, and desired to rest a great portion of the national defence against the approaches of an enemy, on the abilities and exertions of an engineer. In these sentiments he was confirmed by his conception of recent events. The late war had seen the Bourbon armadas hovering on our coasts : accident only (he thought) secured us from the danger with which we were menaced ; our country might have been attacked, our docks and harbours destroyed. Under this impression the duke, from the time he became master of the ordnance, had been uniformly eager for adding to our defences a plan of fortification, and, as we have seen, had inculcated this doctrine upon ministers. In the former session, a scheme of his grace for fortifying the dock-yards of Portsmouth and Plymouth was incidentally mentioned in the house of commons, without being introduced

Duke of
Richmond's
scheme for
fortifying
the dock-
yards.

duced in a regular motion: the house expressed an unwillingness to apply the public money to the execution of such a scheme, until acquainted with the opinions of persons most competent to decide on the wisdom and utility of such a measure. That the desired information might be obtained, his majesty appointed a board of military and naval officers to take the project under consideration, and to meet for that purpose at Portsmouth with the duke of Richmond as their president. The instructions issued to this council propounded six hypothetical positions as themes for discussion, and annexed heads and questions for directing the application of the assumptions to the objects of enquiry*. The hypothesis on which the proposition was grounded was, that the fleet should be absent, or for some other cause prevented from affording its protection to the dock-yards. In the first and second problems, this case was assumed and submitted to the council: the unanimous answer was, that if the dock-yards were not defended by the fleet, fortifications would be necessary†. The four subsequent heads of consultation were grounded upon this basis; and presupposing the absence of the fleet, examined the probable force with which an enemy might invade Britain during such absence of our navy, the troops that might be expected to be ready, the time in which the strength

* See instructions transmitted to the board of officers, dated April 13th, 1785, with extracts from the reports of the board, as laid before the house of commons on the 27th of February, 1786.

† See opinion of officers on the first and second data.

of the country could be collected, and the insufficiency of the present works to hold out until an army were assembled to oppose the invaders. Concerning these subordinate questions, there was considerable diversity of opinion; the greater number, however, delivered a report, which approved the scheme of fortification as requisite for the supposed emergency, but gave no opinion on the probability that such a crisis would arise. Lord Percy and general Burgoyne, with several naval officers, went beyond the given case, and represented the hypothetical event as so extremely unlikely to happen, that it was neither wise nor expedient to provide against it by the expensive system which was proposed. Admirals Milbanke and Graves, captains Macbride, Hotham, Jarvis, and some others, explicitly affirmed the fortifications to be totally unnecessary. The opinion of the majority of land-officers did not amount to an approbation of the scheme, as actually right to be executed in the present state of the country; but was merely an assent to the alleged necessity of fortifying the docks, if the country afforded no other means of defence, and no more than an admission of a conditional proposition as true, in the circumstances which its author supposed. So bounded an acquiescence was construed by the duke of Richmond to authorise the immediate adoption of his plan; to which the cabinet ministers acceding, a board of engineers was directed to make an estimate of the expence, and the requisite sum, as stated by these gentlemen, amounted to 760,097 l. After preparatory motions for the production of papers, Mr. Pitt, on the

27th

Is submitted
to parliament.

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27th of February, introduced the plan in the following general resolution: "It appears to this house, that to provide effectually for securing his majesty's dock-yards at Portsmouth and Plymouth by a permanent system of fortification, founded on the most œconomical principles, and requiring the smallest number of troops possible to answer the purpose of such security, is an essential object for the safety of the state, intimately connected with the general defence of the kingdom, and necessary for enabling the fleet to act with full vigour and effect for the protection of commerce, the support of our distant possessions, and the prosecution of offensive operations in any war in which the nation may hereafter be engaged."

Arguments
for it.

The favourers of the measure founded their arguments on the report of the board of officers, which stated, that neither naval nor military force, nor even both united, could afford a security adequate to the importance of our dock-yards; fortifications were therefore absolutely necessary, in addition to both. They represented the duke of Richmond's scheme as the most eligible that could be adopted, since it was sufficient for the requisite defence, capable of being manned by the smallest force, demanded the least expence to erect, and afforded an increasing degree of security in the course of the construction. These works, moreover, would give greater scope to our fleets; because the dock-yards being thus protected, the navy would consequently be unfettered, and left at liberty to act as occasion might require, in whatever part of the world its presence might be necessary; and they

they would also reduce the standing army. Were an invasion threatened, and were we to trust only to our military force, there would be a necessity for augmenting to a most enormous degree that army on which the whole safety of the kingdom was to rest; but, if it were assisted with fortifications, a much smaller force would answer the purpose. An alarm had prevailed, that the measure was unconstitutional in its tendency, by laying a foundation for a standing army, and diverting into an useless and dangerous channel those resources which should strengthen our navy: far from rendering an increase of troops necessary, the proposed plan would actually tend to remove the necessity of keeping up so large a military establishment as otherwise must be maintained.

Arguments
against it.

These arguments were by no means received without opposition and controversy; but the speaker who most peculiarly distinguished himself, was Mr. Sheridan, who was fast rising to very high oratorical fame and political importance. On the present question he exhibited the substance of all the reasoning that could be adduced against the scheme, and contended, that in itself and in its consequences the project was dangerous and unconstitutional; that the nature and circumstances of the report made by the board of officers did not warrant or authorise the system; fortifications would not reduce the standing army, or if they did, they would still be constituents of strength to the crown, even should it interfere with the rights and liberties of the people. The possible existence of this case
was

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dan's speech
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fications.

was implied in the provisions of the bill of rights, and in the salutary and sacred reserve with which, for a short and limited period, we annually entrusted the executive magistrate with the necessary defence of the country. The orator first viewed the question on the general ground of constitutional jealousy, respecting the augmentation of military force. This sentiment, so natural to Britons, implied no suspicion personally injurious to the individual sovereign, or even his ministers; it merely considered kings and their counsellors as actuated by the same passions with other men: princes were fond of power; from the constitution of the army it must obey the executive ruler, therefore it ought to be circumscribed as much as was possibly consistent with the public safety. Soldiers were maintained for national defence and security, and were not to be multiplied beyond the necessity in which only they could originate. The minister had endeavoured to anticipate this forcible objection to the new plan, by persuading the house that the fortifications would lessen, instead of enlarging the standing army; but his arguments on the subject could not stand the test of examination. If it was proper to fortify Portsmouth and Plymouth, the reasons which justified such a measure would apply to every other port in the kingdom, which might be of sufficient importance to require defence. The plan, as it now stood, proceeded upon two suppositions extremely improbable; the first was, That we should be so much inferior on our own seas, as to permit the enemy to land: secondly, That if they did invade

vade Britain, they would chuse to attack the only places we had fortified. Might they not, on such a supposition, land between Plymouth and Portsmouth; or in Suffex, Kent, or the eastern coasts, and strike at the heart of the empire? If fortification was to be our defence, there must be a circle of fortresses round the coasts; the completion of such a project would require a military establishment, extensive beyond all former example. The safety of England rested on our navy, the courage and enterprize of our people, and not upon ramparts and intrenchments. The proposed fortifications would not be our safe-guard against an invasion; but, though far from being beneficial, they might be efficacious: the garrisons requiring such an additional number of standing troops, in the hands of an ambitious prince or minister might be employed against the liberties of the people. The proposition was not only unconstitutional, unnecessary, and absurd, but unauthorized by the report of officers; mutilated as the statement was which had been submitted to the house, it did not contain grounds for justifying the scheme. The opinion of naval officers had been withheld, but the opinion of land officers was founded upon hypothetical and conditional suggestions, and upon such *data* as the master-general had proposed to them; for the truth or probability of which, the board invariably refused to make themselves responsible. In this part of his speech, Sheridan diversified his close and poignant reasoning by an interspersion of wit most happily appropriated to the subject. The report (he said) had been so artfully framed, that the board of officers appeared to have admitted the

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data; whereas they only assented to conclusions, which in their opinion would ensue on the assumption of the *data*. The master-general of the ordnance deserved the warmest panegyrics for the striking proofs which he had given of his genius as an engineer, which appeared even in planning and constructing the report in question; the professional ability of the master-general shone conspicuously there, as it would upon our coasts: he had made an argument of posts, and conducted his reasoning upon principles of trigonometry as well as logic. There were certain detached *data*, like advanced works, to keep the enemy at a distance from the main object in debate; strong provisions covered the flanks of his assertions; his very queries were in casemates; no impression therefore was to be made on this fortress of sophistry by desultory observations, and it was necessary to sit down before it, and assail it by regular approaches. It was fortunate, however, he said, to observe, that notwithstanding all the skill employed by the noble and literary engineer, his mode of defence on paper was open to the same objection which had been urged against his other fortifications, that, if his adversary got possession of one of his posts, it became strength against him, and the means of subduing the whole line of his argument. No supporter of the bill undertook to refute the arguments of Mr. Sheridan; many who usually voted with administration, were averse to the present measure; even Mr. Pitt was believed not to be very eager for its success, and the event was certainly different from the issue of most of his propositions; for when the question came to a division,

sion, the numbers were equal, and the casting vote of the speaker negatived the motion.

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Soon after the defeat of a scheme which tended to increase military establishments, a bill was introduced for enlarging the authority of military courts, by subjecting to their jurisdiction officers who held commissions by brevet. This clause occasioned a strenuous opposition in both houses: the ground of disapprobation was the arbitrary nature of martial law, which was justified only by necessity, and therefore ought to be extended no farther than necessity required. Its object was to secure the discharge of duty on actual military service, therefore it ought not to operate out of that service. The supporters of the motion contended, that such officers might be invested with command, and therefore should be made subject to a court-martial in case of professional misbehaviour; there were also many other military officers who were not mustered, such as governors and lieutenant-governors, who might eventually exercise command, and ought therefore to become amenable to the laws which bind other soldiers: persons chusing to have the advantage of military rank, should hold it on the condition of complying with military rules; and if they disliked the terms, they might ease themselves of their grievance by resigning their commissions. On these grounds the clause was carried in both houses.

On the 29th of March, Mr. Pitt brought forward his plans * for the reduction of the national debt. A

* The minister is believed to have availed himself of the financial ability of Dr. Price, who so thoroughly understood political arithmetic.

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Plan of Mr.
Pitt for re-
ducing the
national
debt.

committee had been appointed early in the session, in order to investigate and exactly ascertain the public income and expenditure, and strike the balance: the result of the investigation from the income of the year 1785, was,

Income,	—	£. 15,379,132
Expenditure,	—	14,478,181

So that a surplus of more than £. 900,000 remained; and on this basis Mr. Pitt formed his scheme. He proposed that, by taxes neither numerous nor burdensome, the balance might be raised to a million: by a succinct and clear view of our finances he demonstrated, that excess of income beyond expenditure was in the present and following years likely to increase; but in making his calculations, he had contented himself with concluding that it would not decrease. This million was to be appropriated unalienably to the gradual extinction of the national debt. Several savings of expence and increases of revenue, especially through the customs from the suppression of smuggling, would add to the national income: annuities would also fall into the same fund; the accumulated compound added to these sources would, in twenty-eight years, if properly managed, produce an annual revenue of four millions to the state. For the management of this fund, commissioners were to be appointed to receive two hundred and fifty-thousand pounds quarterly, with the full power of employing it in the purchase of stock. In chusing persons to be entrusted, Mr. Pitt proceeded on his general principle, which had been already exhibited in his India bill; that in

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circumstances requiring new delegation of executive power, the trust should be vested in men whose official situation presumed their competency to the execution of the commission; the speaker of the house of commons, the chancellor of the exchequer, the master of the rolls, the governor and deputy-governor of the bank of England, and accountant-general, were gentlemen whose nomination he recommended. After illustrating his calculations, and the advantages of his scheme, he compressed the substance into the following motion: "That the sum of one million be annually granted to certain commissioners, to be by them applied to the purchase of stock, towards discharging the public debt of this country; which money shall arise out of the surplusses, excesses, and overplus monies, composing the fund commonly called the sinking fund." The policy of contracting expenditure within income, in order to liquidate debt, was so obviously just, that no one dissented from the principle, but various objections were made to the scheme. These are reducible to two general heads: first, that the alleged excess did not exist: secondly, that admitting its existence, the proposed mode of application was not the best that might be adopted. On this subject, Mr. Sheridan took a leading part in opposition; he moved a series of resolutions, declaring there were not sufficient grounds to establish the existence of the asserted surplus; that the calculations were founded upon one year peculiarly favourable, and not upon such a number of succeeding years as could constitute

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Mr. Sheridan takes the most active part in controverting the financial propositions of the minister.

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a fair average; and that in the existing accounts even of that year, at least in the report of the committee, there were certain articles erroneously stated to the credit of income, and others erroneously assigned to the diminution of expenditure. He, however, neither proved the alleged errors, nor the impropriety of calculating from 1785, the first year to which any reasoning on the reduced expenditure, or growing revenue of a peace establishment and rising trade, could apply. The objections to the mode were principally adduced against the appropriation being unalienable in any circumstances: in times of war and pecuniary emergency, it might be expedient to have recourse to the present fund, instead of a loan. To modify this objection, Mr. Fox proposed, that in a future loan the commissioners might accept of as much of it as they could pay from the public money in their hands; and thus, besides a prevention of that amount of future debt which would be equivalent to the redemption of the past, the public would be gainers by the profits which would accrue from such a loan *. Mr. Pitt not only adopted, but highly applauded this clause: Mr. Pulteney proposed, that the commissioners should continue purchasing stock for the public when at or above par, unless otherwise directed by parliament. This provision, of which the object

* For instance, if there were a loan of six millions, of which the commissioners contracted for one million, and there was a *bonus* of two per cent. the public would gain 20,000*l*.

was to attach to parliament the responsibility of giving instructions to the commissioners, if necessary in the specified circumstances, was adopted. The bill containing the original principle and plan, though with some modification of the latter, passed through both houses, and received the royal assent.

Mr. Pitt had examined the frauds against the revenue with minuteness and fullness of enquiry. In no subject of impost he found they were more prevalent than in wine: the present amount of the revenue resulting from that article was less by two hundred and eighty thousand pounds, than in the middle of the last century, yet it was manifest that the consumption was greatly increased since that period: he attributed the defalcation, first, to the fraudulent importation of large quantities of foreign wine, without paying the duties: secondly, and principally, to the sale of a spurious liquor under the name of that beverage. To remedy this evil, he proposed a bill for subjecting foreign wines to the excise; by this means they could no longer fraudulently escape the payment of the revenue, as the excise, by its opportunities of more completely vigilant inspection, could much more effectually prevent smuggling, if attempted; and there would not be the same motives to adulteration, when the substitute should have to pay the same duty as the genuine: the consequence would be, that the public would, without an additional price, procure better wine, and the revenue would be much greater, which would produce an increased demand for our manufactures, and thus the mass of productive industry would be augmented. For

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Further
measure of
Mr. Pitt for
preventing
frauds against
the revenue.
He proposes
to subject
foreign
wines to the
excise.

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all these reasons, Mr. Pitt recommended the adoption of his plan. The arguments against it rested on two grounds: first general, on the impolicy and unconstitutional tendency of extending the excise laws; secondly special, on the inexpediency of the mode. These necessarily turned on topics often discussed, the collection of the duty by inspecting and searching private houses, the summary proceedings against offenders. Under the second head it was contended, that the practice of gauging, so applicable to brewers, was perfectly incompatible with respect to such an article as wine; that continual increase and diminution of the trade stock would baffle the endeavours of the officers to keep a regular account: as these objections did not apply more forcibly to wine than to liquors already subject to the excise, they made little impression; the bill passed through both houses, and received the royal assent.

A bill for
the purpose
is passed into
a law.

Bill for ap-
pointing
commission-
ers to ex-
amine the
crown laws.

In consequence of a message from the king, Mr. Pitt, on the 20th of June, introduced a bill for appointing commissioners to inquire into the state and condition of the woods, forests, and land-revenues, belonging to the crown. Against this proposition it was contended, that the powers granted to the commissioners were contrary to the security of the subjects, whose rights, founded in prescription, would be invaded. It subjected all persons who held of the crown, or possessed estates adjoining to the crown lands, to an inquisition into their ancient boundaries and title-deeds, at the mere motion of the commissioners, without any other legal or ordinary process. It was supported on the

ground of expediency, that it was proper and wise to ascertain the condition of these lands, in order to see of what improvements they were susceptible. In the commons, the bill encountered no material opposition; in the peers, lord Loughborough argued strongly against the proposition: he and other lords entered a protest; but it passed by a majority of twenty-eight to eighteen. Mr. Marsham proposed a bill for extending, to persons employed by the navy and ordnance, the disqualifications contained in Mr. Crew's bill of 1782, for preventing revenue officers from voting at elections of members of parliament. The proposition was controverted by Mr. Pitt; the situation of persons intended by Mr. Crew, and of those now designed to be excluded, was totally different: the revenue officers were under the influence of government, but the persons employed in the departments in question were subject to no control; they were at all times capable of procuring what was equal to their present salaries in foreign services, or from our merchants at home; the former were dependent upon the crown, the latter totally independent; no fair argument could therefore be adduced from the disfranchisement of the one set, for disqualifying the other: on these grounds the proposed bill was rejected.

A discussion was now begun in the house of commons, which long occupied the attention of parliament and the public; this was the conduct of Warren Hastings esq. late governor-general of India. Early in the session, major John Scott, late confidential secretary to Mr. Hastings, and now a member of the house of commons, re-
minded

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The conduct
of Mr.
Hastings be-
comes a
subject of
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mind Mr. Burke of his charges against the governor-general, said that he was now returned from India, and called on his accuser to bring forward the allegations of criminality, that they might undergo the enquiry and receive the decision of the house. Major Scott was, doubtless, warmly attached to Mr. Hastings, and perfectly confident of his innocence; nevertheless, the prudence of such a challenge is very questionable. Many warmly approved Mr. Hastings's character and administration, and conceived him the saviour of India from a native combination co-operating with the ambition of France; these admirers could not estimate him more highly than at present, though he were freed from charges which they thought altogether unfounded, while persons of a contrary opinion might not be convinced even by his acquittal. Mr. Scott undoubtedly knew, that however innocent his friend might really be, there was a great body of oral and written evidence in the reports of the committees, which tended to establish the opposite belief, or at any rate to leave the issue doubtful; the multiplicity and complexity of allegations would certainly render the process extremely tedious. From all these circumstances, an enquiry and trial must involve its subject in a labyrinth of difficulty, even were the ultimate event to be favourable. The zeal, therefore, which produced this defiance, was evidently imprudent; by rousing charges that might have lain dormant, it actually proved highly injurious to him whom it was intended to serve. Mr. Burke did not immediately answer major Scott's summons, but within
a few

a few days opened the discussion. On the 17th of February he brought the subject before the house, and in an introductory speech traced the history of the proceedings of parliament respecting the affairs of British India, and also the alleged misconduct of the company's servants, from the period of lord Clive's government to the reports of the secret and select committees, the resolutions moved thereupon, and the approbation repeatedly given to these proceedings by his majesty from the throne. On the authority, the sanction, and the encouragement thus afforded him, he rested his accusation of Mr. Hastings as a delinquent of the first magnitude. There were three species of inquisition against a state culprit: first, prosecution in the courts below, which, in the present case, he thought very inadequate to the complicated nature and extent of the offence, and the enormity of the offender: secondly, a bill of pains and penalties of which he disapproved as a hardship and injustice to the accused, by obliging him to anticipate his defence, and by imposing on the house two relations that ought ever to be kept separate, those of accusers and of judges. The only process that remained, was by the ancient and constitutional mode of impeachment. The first step in such a cause, was a general review of the evidence, to enable them to determine whether the person charged should be impeached. If the general question was carried in the affirmative, they must next appoint a committee to divide and arrange the evidence, under the heads of which the impeachment should consist. He proposed, previously to a resolution of

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Mr. Burke
opens the
subject.
His intro-
ductory
speech.

He proposes
to proceed
by impeach-
ment;

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and pre-
sents a sum-
mary of
alleged cri-
minal acts.

of impeachment, that the evidence should be particularly investigated by a committee of the whole house, that they might be well acquainted with the grounds of procedure before they should attempt to proceed. He eloquently described the disagreeable nature of an accuser's office, and contended that it was not imposed on him by choice, but by necessity. He moved for the production of papers alleged to contain evidence relative to the subject, and endeavoured to shew that Mr. Dundas, who in 1782 had moved the recal of Mr. Hastings, ought to have taken a lead in the present business. Mr. Dundas acknowledged that he had recommended the recal of Mr. Hastings as politically expedient, but denied that his proposition expressed, or even implied, any judicial charge of criminal conduct, which consistency would require him to support; if there was appearance of guilt, he agreed that it ought to be investigated, that if found to be real, adequate punishment might be inflicted. No objection was made to the production of the papers which were then specified; but Mr. Burke continuing at subsequent meetings to move for various other documents, Mr. Pitt, before he would agree to the requisition, proposed that the accuser should exhibit an abstract of the charges which he intended to adduce, that the house might judge whether the papers required or to be required were relevant to the elucidation of the subject. Mr. Burke read a short outline of the charges, and pointed out the matters which the writings were intended to explain and substantiate. The charges were twenty-two in number: first, the Rohilla war: second, the

the detention of revenues of the province of Cola Alla Habad: third, the proceedings respecting Cheyt Sing: fourth, the conduct towards the princesses of Oude: fifth and sixth, the treatment of two rajahs: seventh, extravagant contracts made by Mr. Hastings in the name of the company: eighth, illegal presents: ninth, disregard of the orders of the East India company: tenth, eleventh, and twelfth, extravagant contracts on account of the company, and enormous salaries bestowed on officers of his own institution: thirteenth, ambassadors sent to Arcot and the decan: fourteenth, the Mahratta treaty: fifteenth, the management of the revenues of Bengal: sixteenth, the ruin of the province of Oude: seventeenth, the dismissal of Mahomed Khan from the internal management of Bengal: eighteenth, treatment of the Mogul: nineteenth, a libel upon the directors: twentieth, the Mahratta war: twenty-first, the suppression of correspondence: twenty-second, the treatment of Fizullakham. Of these articles, by far the most distinguished were the third and fourth: Mr. Burke employed the remainder of February and the whole of March in moving for papers and preparing his accusations. On the 4th of April he charged Warren Hastings esquire, late governor-general of Bengal, with sundry high crimes and misdemeanors; nine of his articles he then delivered, and the other thirteen the following week. Mr. Hastings petitioned the house that he might be heard in his defence, and that he might be allowed a copy of the accusation. The first request the prosecutors

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prosecutors granted : Mr. Burke objected to the last, at so early a stage of the prosecution ; he was, however, over-ruled. The month of May was chiefly occupied in examining evidence ; and on the first of June Mr. Burke adduced his first charge, in the following terms : “ That there are grounds sufficient to charge Warren Hastings esq. with high crimes and misdemeanours, upon the matter of the said article.” After a full discussion, it appeared to the house, that this war was unavoidable on the part of Mr. Hastings : this proposition was negatived by a majority of one hundred and nineteen to seventy-six. On the 3d of June, Mr. Fox brought forward the charge respecting Benares : he contended that Mr. Hastings had acted unjustly in his first demands ; that his subsequent conduct was a continuation and increase of injustice, but that his last proceedings, when he arrived in that province, were flagrantly iniquitous and tyrannical, and had rendered the British name odious in India. On the other hand, it was argued that the demands of Mr. Hastings were agreeable to the established conduct of superiors in India, from their tributary dependents, in situations of danger and emergency : the circumstances of affairs were extremely critical ; the governor-general was reduced to the alternative of either requiring pecuniary supplies, or wanting money to pay his troops, when their most strenuous efforts were necessary for saving India against the confederacy of France, and the native powers ; the rajah's refusal, combined with various parts of his conduct, manifested disaffection to the British establishment, when Mr. Hastings

Hastings went to Benares; Cheyt Sing was also in actual rebellion, and intimately connected with the allied enemies of British India. His conduct was therefore justified by necessity, as part of that general system of wise and comprehensive policy which preserved our important interests in Indostan. Mr. Pitt admitted that the situation of affairs at that period was extremely critical, but considered the proceedings at Benares beyond the exigence of the case, and necessity of the service. It was carried by a majority of one hundred and nineteen to seventy-nine, that there was a matter of impeachment in the charge in question.

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A majority, including Mr. Pitt, finds ground of impeachment in the proceedings against Cheyt Sing.

During these proceedings concerning part of the transactions in India, Mr. Dundas introduced a bill for the improvement of its government in future. Its principal object was to enlarge the powers of the governor-general; first, by vesting in him the nomination of the vacant seats in the council; secondly, by limiting the officers of the governor-general and commander in chief of the forces; and thirdly, by authorising him to decide upon every measure, even though not agreeable to the council. The proposition was opposed by Mr. Burke, as tending to introduce despotic government into India; but its framer insisted, that the responsibility of the governor-general was in proportion to his power, and that abuse of his trust was punishable by a fair and established judicature: he was himself satisfied, after long and attentive enquiry into the affairs of India, that all the recent mischiefs in that country had arisen from the parties formed in the different

Mr. Dundas's bill for improving the government of British India.

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different councils, and the factious spirit which had almost uniformly pervaded these bodies. By his system, the governor-general, on the one hand, would no longer be restrained by personal pique and factious opposition, from forming and executing such plans as he thought most conducive to the public good; yet, on the other hand, he was amenable to the laws of his country for any unjust, tyrannical, or injurious exercise of his power. The authority allowed to the officer in question, was founded on the same general principle, as that conferred on the several members of the British state, sufficiently extensive to effect the useful purposes required, and so clearly bounded as to prevent pernicious exercise.

Supplies.

The supplies of this session were eighteen thousand seamen, and about thirty thousand soldiers. A loan was wanted, 2,500,000*l.* were to be raised by exchequer bills, paid as usual, from the first aids of the following year; about 200,000*l.* were to be raised by a lottery. There were no new taxes, but a duty of a penny per gallon on spirits, on deals, and battens, on hair-powder and pomatum, the whole being intended to make up the sum stated to be wanted; that the surplus of income might be the annual million appropriated to the liquidation of the national debt.

The session
terminates.

On the 11th of July his majesty closed the session by a speech from the throne, in which he testified the highest satisfaction with the measures adopted for improving the resources of the country, and reducing the national debt. He continued to receive

receive assurances that the peace was likely to remain undisturbed; the happy effects of general tranquillity appeared in the extension of the national commerce, and he should adopt every measure tending to confirm these advantages, and to give additional encouragement to the manufactures and industry of his people.

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Continental affairs.—Death and character of Frederic of Prussia.—His provisions for the security of his successor.—Revolution in Denmark.—Queen dowager disgraced, and the reins of government assumed by the prince royal.—Physical calamities in various parts of the continent.—Commercial and political pursuits of France.—Amiable character of Louis XVI.—Britain;—Alarming attempts against our sovereign,—providentially prevented.—Magnanimous humanity of the king.—The person proves to be a lunatic named Margaret Nicholson.—General consternation on hearing of the attempt.—Anxious affection of all ranks for their revered sovereign.—Congratulatory addresses.

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Continental
affairs.
Death and
character of
Frederic of
Prussia.

ON the continent of Europe, no event so much distinguished the year 1786, as the death of Frederic II. king of Prussia; who, for half a century, had acted such a conspicuous part on the grand military and political theatre. Were we to estimate his conduct on the simple principle, that a long and constant series of successes must arise from the possession and steady exertion of adequate qualities, we should find grounds for concluding, that the talents of Frederic, as a soldier, a statesman, and a law-giver, were singularly eminent. Concerning a man who has long enjoyed the uncontrolled direction of any species of affairs, we may fairly and candidly ask, in what state did he find the subject of his trust? did any material advantage assist, or difficulty retard, its improvement? has he left the professed objects of his care in a better or worse situation?

situation? When the government of Prussia devolved upon Frederic, he found a small, inconsiderable, and disjointed kingdom, without arts, industry, or riches; and without either the disposition or means of rendering the territory productive, the inhabitants prosperous, or the state respectable. The treasury was scanty, and the income inferior to the necessary expenditure; his dominions were surrounded by powerful and jealous potentates, who commanded numerous, valiant, and well-disciplined armies: in such circumstances, Frederic raised his country to be a great, well-compact, and flourishing empire. By teaching his subjects industry, agricultural skill, manufactures, and commerce, he bettered their condition, civilized their manners, enlightened their understandings, and enabled them to acquire the comforts and enjoyments of life. His kingdom, which before occupied a small space in the geography, and still less in the politics, of Europe, was by him rendered the terror of its most formidable foes, and the admiration of mankind. Great as was the result, there are more special grounds for estimating the character of Frederic than bare effects: his progress exhibits the operations of the most efficacious qualities; an understanding that grasped every object of necessary or useful consideration; an invention, rapidly fertile in resources, increased both in force and effort with the difficulties by which its exertion was required: self-possession never suffered his powers to be suspended by either peril or calamity; intrepid courage faced danger, and magnanimous fortitude, sustaining adversity, rendered misfortunes temporary,

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which would have overwhelmed others in destruction. Never had a leader with so small a force to contend with such a powerful combination, not of mere multitude (as when Asiatic enervation by feeble crowds impotently tried to overwhelm European strength), but of hardy, disciplined, and veteran troops, equal to his own in prowess and military skill, and quadruple in number. Frederic experienced dismal reverses of fortune; having attained the highest pinnacle of success by dint of genius, he, from incidents and circumstances, against which no wisdom could provide, was driven to the lowest abyss of disaster; the very existence of his kingdom became doubtful; his inflexible constancy, uninterrupted perseverance, and transcendent abilities, triumphed in calamities, and rose through adversity to victory and glory. His exertions during the seven years war demonstrated to his enemies, that all their attempts to crush Frederic were unavailing against him, and recoiled on themselves. Hostilities being terminated, he had leisure to cultivate the arts of peace, and both in planning and executing measures for that purpose, he proved that his mind was formed for excelling not only in war, but in every other great and difficult pursuit to which circumstances might require the direction of his efforts. Complete comprehension of objects simplified plans for their attainment: the Prussian king was a great inventor in the military system, particularly in the mode of attack. His object was to render the assault irresistible in one or more points, so that the confusion produced there might be communicated to the whole

whole line; the means were not merely to advance intrepidly and charge vigorously, but in the moment of onset to form such unforeseen and skilful dispositions, as would enable an army, greatly inferior in number, to surpass the enemy in exertion, and wherever the action was likely to prove most decisive, to bring a greater front to act against a smaller *. His internal improvements proposed at once to increase the resources and meliorate the character of his subjects; to render them, both from external circumstances and personal qualities, fitter for securing and extending individual and national prosperity, virtue, and happiness. Addicted himself to letters, he was extremely attentive to the education of his subjects, according to their circumstances, condition, or probable and destined pursuits. Tinctured with infidelity, he was far from encouraging its general diffusion. Totally free himself from bigotted prejudice or superstition, he knew the compatibility of such errors in others with most beneficial conduct, and granted every sect full and undisturbed toleration. That there were great alloys among Frederic's excellencies, he would be a partial panegyrist, not an impartial historian, who should deny. The justice of several parts of his conduct in the early part of his reign was very questionable. One very important act in a later period admits of no dispute: the dismemberment of Poland will always remain a monument of exorbitant ambition and unjustifiable usurpation by Frederic and the other powers concerned. It

* See Gillies's Frederic.

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would not be difficult to evince, that both the subjects thus forcibly acquired were bettered in their condition by this annexation; but shallow would be the moralist who, from eventual and contingent good, would defend injustice. It might be easily shewn that the greater number of victorious commanders, in proportion to their power, have been guilty of as ambitious usurpations as Frederic, and that not many of them have by their victories done so much good. In appreciating conduct we must consider the circumstances and opportunities of the agent, and the temptations which these produced; how very few men, it may be asked, having a very desirable object within their grasp, would abstain from possessing it, even though not conformable to strict justice. The perspicacious and recollecting observer of mankind must recognise such conduct to be natural, but the just estimator of moral sentiments and actions will reprobate it as unjust. Frederic, with considerable moral defects, possessed very high moral and the very highest intellectual excellencies; he raised a small poor territory to be a great, opulent, and powerful kingdom; and rendered ignorant and uncivilized inhabitants an enlightened and civilized people. To a very great portion of mankind most momentous benefits have accrued from the efforts of the renowned Frederic.

His provisions for the security of his successor.

As the power of Prussia had arisen from the counsels and exertions of Frederic, many apprehended, that, resting on his character, its stability would be endangered by his death; and supposed, that the ambitious confederation of the imperial courts,

courts, so recently thwarted by the vigilant sagacity of Frederic, would take advantage of his death, and endeavour to reduce northern Germany to dependence. But the provisions of Frederic had not been temporary, to expire with his own life: he acquired and formed such strength and power as could be protected by mediocrity of talents, that he knew was to be generally expected in sovereigns as well as others, and which only he saw his immediate successor to possess. His counsellors had been trained by himself, and were likely to continue the plan of policy which the object of their adoration had delineated and conducted with so signal success. For the preservation of his dominions, Frederic bequeathed the most effectual securities to his successor which human wisdom could provide or devise, by leaving him a full treasury, and a formidable army, wise and experienced counsellors, and a people enthusiastically attached to the government and memory of their illustrious king. The imperial powers thought it by no means expedient to interfere with a kingdom so powerfully protected, and were besides maturing their preparations for their own principal design, in the prosecution of which it was their obvious interests to win Prussia to forbearance, instead of provoking her to war. Thus the death of Frederic made no immediate perceivable difference in the politics of Europe.

In Denmark a revolution had taken place in 1784, which proved very beneficial to that kingdom. Ever since 1772, the queen dowager having triumphed over the unfortunate and ill-used Matilda, from the imbecility of the king, retained the

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supreme power which she had acquired by such unjustifiable means. Her sway was indeed established beyond all control, and beyond the probability of subversion. She had filled the great offices of state with her adherents and favourites; the son of the unhappy Matilda was a child, and the chances against his life at that tender age being considerable, Julia's son, prince Frederic, (the king's half-brother,) was regarded as the presumptive successor to the throne: all things seemed to concur in securing her influence and authority for life. The exercise of her dominion was far from dispelling the hatred which the dowager-queen so deservedly incurred by her means of elevation. Imperious and tyrannical, she sacrificed the national good to the interests of her supporters and minions; and was hateful throughout the kingdom, except to her own creatures. Retribution though slow was not the less sure; as the prince royal approached to maturity, he indicated qualities that excited the hopes of the people in general, and especially of those, many in number, who were disgusted with the queen-dowager's government. In the seventeenth year of his age, the heir of the crown, by his manly abilities and character, was become the universal favourite of the nation, and in a few months acquired such influence and power as to overwhelm the usurpers of his father's authority. With such wisdom and secrecy had he formed his measures, that, being declared of age at seventeen, he was placed at the head of the council-board; when he acquainted the junto that directed the affairs of the kingdom under the queen-dowager, that the king

his

his father had no farther occasion for their services, before they had conceived the most distant idea of their approaching downfall. Having dismissed these ministers, he published an ordinance, that no orders from the council of state were in future to be received, or considered valid, which had not been previously reported to the king, signed by him, and counter-signed by the prince royal. Having accomplished so desirable and beneficial a change, the prince conducted himself with temperate, wise, and magnanimous policy toward the junto and its head. He abstained from punishing the planners and most active instruments of the revolution 1772, any farther than by the loss of their offices. On the queen herself he bestowed a superb castle and extensive demesnes in Holstein, whence it was understood she was not to return to court. Prince Frederic had never taken any share in his mother's cabals; to him his nephew presented great possessions, and made him second to himself in the cabinet-council. His subsequent conduct confirmed and increased the opinion of his countrymen; he bestowed the closest attention on public business, and studied the political and commercial interests of Denmark. His highness planned and executed a very great and royal work, which was finished in 1786, the formation of a short and direct junction between the Baltic and the German ocean. This was effected by drawing a navigable canal from west to east across the peninsula of Jutland. Besides his attention to official duty, the prince manifested a disposition to literature,

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Queen-
dowager
disgraced,
and the
reins of go-
vernment
assumed by
the prince
royal.

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Physical ca-
lamities in
various parts
of the con-
tinent.

ture, and became the patron of learning and learned men.

During this year and the two former, various parts of the world suffered dreadful calamities from physical causes. Earthquakes, which had so desolated Calabria and other parts of Europe, raged both in Asia and America. In Europe and the adjacent parts of Africa and Asia, there was a succession of severe and irregular seasons; violent storms of rain spread inundations over the richest parts of Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Hungary, Italy, and France. Rigorous cold destroyed the crops of Norway and Sweden; and the same causes prevented Livonia from affording them the usual supplies: even the fisheries of the north did not yield their wonted stores; the consequences were, that Norway, notwithstanding every effort of government, laboured under an absolute famine. In Iceland a new kind of calamity ravaged the country; mount Hecla, and the other volcanos which so much distinguish that island, although perhaps they promote the purposes of vegetation by communicating a genial warmth to its frozen bosom, have at all times been the terror, and at particular periods the scourge and destroyers, of the inhabitants. The present calamity, however, was totally new: the country with its products were now consumed by subterraneous fire. This destroyer of nature made its first appearance in June 1784, reduced to cinders every thing which it met, and continued burning until the month of May in the following year, having in that time extended its devastation

vastation about twenty leagues in length, and from four to five in breadth. The great river Skaptage, which was from seven to eight fathoms in depth, and half a league in width, was entirely dried up, its bed and channel presenting a dreadful yawning chasm *. A similar fire broke out about this time on the eastern side of the same range of mountains, and pursued its course in the opposite direction. The pestilence also raged with uncommon malignity over those countries which it usually pervades: from the Atlantic borders of Morocco to the extremities of Egypt, and from Palestine to the mouth of the Euxine, the African and Asiatic coasts of the Mediterranean, with those of Thrace on the opposite side, the cruelty of its ravages was severe, and the destruction of mankind greater, than at any period within the reach of memory, or perhaps within the records of history.

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France persevered in her attention to maritime and commercial affairs, and endeavoured to increase the number of her naval arsenals and harbours on the ocean. The port of Cherburg, on the coast of Normandy, from its vicinity to England, and lying directly opposite to Hampshire, seemed directly calculated for this purpose. Here the French were constructing a capacious basin, with docks and other requisites necessary to a great na-

Commercial
 and political
 pursuits of
 of France.

* About a fourth part of the consumed soil consisted of a lava, and of mossy bogs or marshes; the remains of the burnt earth resembled vast heaps of calcined stones, and were of the colour of vitriol. Annual Register 1786, History of Europe, p. 60.

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val arsenal; the works were stupendous. It was proposed to cover the road, being about a league and a half in length, with a series of moles, leaving only two sufficient openings, one for the passage of ships of the largest size, and the other for trading vessels. Forts, with batteries of the heaviest cannon, were to be erected on the different moles, in such situations as to be impregnable, and to render the approach of an enemy utterly impracticable. M. Calonne, the prime minister of France, in order to open the way for the introduction of foreign industry, procured the publication of a law, which might be considered as a counter-part of the noted edict of Nantz. This was a decree, which invited strangers of all christian nations and religious persuasions to settle in the country, and enabled them to purchase lands and enjoy all the rights of citizens*. To encourage artists and manufacturers of all countries to settle in France, another ordinance was published, allowing them the same privileges which they enjoyed in their native lands, and for a limited time granting them an immunity from all duties on the importation of the

* The judicious author of the history of Europe, in the Annual Register of 1786, observes, that it afforded a singular object of moral and political consideration, to behold fourteen vessels from North America arrive together in the harbour of Dunkirk, freighted with the families, goods, and property of a colony of quakers and baptists (the most rigid, perhaps, in their religious principles of any among the reformed), who were to come to settle at that place, in a Roman catholic country, and under the government of the French monarch; two circumstances the most directly opposite to their ancient sentiments, whether political or religious.

raw

raw materials that were used in their manufactures ; also exempting them and their workmen from the payment of taxes, and every personal impost. On these conditions they were obliged to continue for a specified number of years in the kingdom, but, at the expiration of that term, they were at liberty to depart themselves, and to move their property wherever they chose. The king and his ministry were no less disposed to favour the native protestants, as far as was consistent with the well-being and security of the national church : indulgences were likewise extended this year to the peasants, who long had been grievously oppressed ; they were relieved from various arbitrary exactions, both of labour and money, and their condition was in general meliorated. The great objects which the mild and benevolent Louis pursued were, the improvement of the strength and productiveness of his kingdom, the alleviation of oppressions interwoven with the government, as it had descended to him from his ancestors, and the extension of the blessings of liberty to his people.

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The most remarkable domestic occurrence of the year was an attempt, originating in phrenzy, that fortunately answered no other purpose than to demonstrate the warm affection with which a happy, feeling, and grateful people regarded their sovereign. On Wednesday the 2d of August, his Majesty came to town to the levee ; as he was alighting from his carriage at the garden-gate of St. James's-palace, opposite to the duke of Marlborough's wall, a woman, decently dressed, presented to the king a paper folded up in the form of a petition ;

Alarming
attempt a-
gainst our
sovereign,

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providen-
tially pre-
vented.

Magnani-
mous hu-
manity of
the king.

The at-
tempter
proves to be
a lunatic
named
Margaret
Nicholson.

tion; his majesty stooping to receive it, felt at his stomach a thrust, which passed between his coat and waistcoat; drawing back, he said, "What does the woman mean?" At that instant a yeoman of the guards laying hold of her arm, observed something fall from her hand, and called out, "'Tis a knife!" The king said, "I am not hurt; take care of the woman; do not hurt her." Much affected by the attempt, his majesty said, in a voice expressive of tender feelings, "I am sure I have not deserved such treatment from any of my subjects!" On opening the paper, when he entered the royal apartments, he found written: "To the king's most excellent majesty;" the usual head to petitions; but nothing more. The woman was immediately taken into custody, and carried to the guard-chamber. Being questioned how she could make such a wicked and daring attempt; her answer was, "That when she was brought before proper persons, she would give her reasons." From the hour of twelve to five she remained in a chamber to which she was conducted, but would not answer one word to any person. In the evening, after the levee was broken up, she was examined by the ministers, the law officers of the crown, and several magistrates. Her replies, claiming the crown as her property, and threatening the nation with bloodshed for many ages if her right was denied, indicated an insanity, which, from appearances, examination, and subsequent inquiry, was soon discovered to be real: her name proved to be Margaret Nicholson. It was imagined by many, that disappointment of her own, or some near connection, concerning a place under govern-

government, had contributed to her insanity, and given her disordered fancy such a direction; but when her history was traced, it was found to have no relation to either the court or government. After a short consultation, it was resolved that she should be sent to Bethlehem hospital, where she has been confined ever since.

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Most providential it was, that this wretched creature made use of her left hand, her other presenting the petition; and that its position was such, that she could only aim obliquely. Had her right hand been employed, which, where she stood, could have struck directly, dismal might the consequence have been. Even with the aim which she took, the happiness of the nation, in the safety of its revered monarch, was highly indebted to our king's presence of mind. Had his majesty been thrown into confusion by a danger so unexpected, the fatal deed might have been perpetrated, before the attempt was perceived. Next to his magnanimity, the considerate humanity of the sovereign shone most evidently conspicuous. His benevolent injunction to abstain from hurting a person who had compassed against him so atrocious an act, most probably saved the assassin from the summary and immediate vengeance of his surrounding subjects. Similar conduct in similar circumstances, this history has still to record, concerning the same exalted character. Fortunately for their feelings, neither her majesty nor any of the royal offspring were present. The intelligence of the danger was accompanied by the certain information that it was escaped. The report of the aim excited horror and indignant resentment

General
consterna-
tion on
hearing of
the attempt.

Anxious af-
fection of
all ranks
for their
sovereign.

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Congratulatory addresses on the escape of the beloved sovereign.

sentment through the nation, until the state of the perpetrator's mind was made generally known, and the dreadful impression of the calamity threatened yielded to delight that it had threatened in vain. The exquisite pleasure that results from terrible and impending evil avoided, poured itself in addresses of ardent and heart-felt loyalty from every quarter of the kingdom. His subjects before knew that they loved and revered their king; but now only felt the full force of these affections, when the impression present to their minds was the imminent danger of their object.

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Mr. Pitt's enlarged views on the relation between this country and France.—Perceives that peace and amicable intercourse is the interest of both countries.—Thinks past enmity not an unsurmountable bar to permanent reconciliation.—Projects a commercial intercourse, to be mutually beneficial by a reciprocal exchange of surplus for supply.—Seeks the best assistance, and employs the most skilful agents.—Principle and details of the treaty.—Meeting of parliament and the king's speech.—Treaty submitted to parliament.—Mr. Fox and his co-adjutors oppose the treaty.—Arguments.—France the unalterable enemy of Great Britain.—Mutual interest can never eradicate that sentiment.—Every commercial connection with France has been injurious to Britain.—For the treaty, denied that there is any unalterable enmity between France and this country.—Not always enemies.—The repeated discomfiture of France, warring against the navy of England, at length taught her the policy of peace.—The treaty supported by a great majority.—Convention with Spain.—Consolidation of the customs.—Application of the dissenters for the repeal of the test act.—Number and respectability of the dissenters as a body.—Distinguished talents of some of their leaders.—Dissenters favourable to Mr. Pitt, and thence expect his support of their application.—Previous steps to prepossess the public in their favour.—Mr. Beaufoy demonstrates their zeal for liberty and the present establishment.—Lord North, a moderate tory, opposes their application, as inimical to the church.—Mr. Pitt opposes it on the grounds of political expediency.—The test no infringement of toleration, merely a condition of admissibility to certain offices of trust.—Eminent dissenters had avowed themselves desirous of subverting the church;—therefore not expedient

to extend their power.—Application rejected.—Bill for the relief of insolvent debtors.—Lord Rawdon's enlightened and liberal policy.—Bill negatived.—Enquiry about Scotch peerages.—Magnanimous sacrifice by the prince of Wales of splendor to justice.—Situation of his highness.—Satisfactory adjustments.—Proceedings respecting Mr. Hastings.—Writings in his defence.—The nation long averse to his impeachment.—Hastings's cause generally popular.—Eloquence gives a turn to public opinion.—Celebrated speech of Mr. Sheridan on the Begum charge.—Its effects on the house of commons and the public.—Singular instance of its impression on a literary defender of Mr. Hastings.—A committee appointed to prepare articles of impeachment.—The commons impeach Warren Hastings at the bar of the house of lords.—Supplies.—Favourable state of the finances.—Mr. Dundas brings forward the financial state of British India.—Promising aspect of affairs.

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Enlarged
views of Mr
Pitt on the
relations be-
tween Bri-
tain and
France.

HISTORY recorded that France and England had been usually jealous, and often hostile: statesmen on both sides acted upon an assumption, that rivalry and enmity were unavoidable consequences of their situation; and, therefore, that the chief objects of external policy to both, were reciprocal suspicion, and provision for probable enmity. The bold and soaring genius of Pitt was not to be trammelled by precedent: he investigated principle, and combining generalization with the experience of political systems and events, easily traced effects, either good or bad, to their causes; and could discover in what cases and circumstances, continuance, or change of plan or of practice, was expedient or unwise. The sagacity of this minister analyzed the history and spirit of the wars which had been carried on between Britain and France, since trade and navigation

vigation became so much the objects of European pursuits: and saw that they had commonly arisen from a desire on the side of France of equalling, and even surpassing, Britain on her peculiar element. He considered the event, as well as the origin: every endeavour of our neighbour to triumph by sea had diminished the riches and power which she sought to increase by a contest: both her commerce and naval force had been uniformly reduced by the very wars, through which she attempted their extension. The resources of Britain had risen in proportion to the power which she was compelled to combat; and all the confederacies which her rival could form, were incapable of depriving this island of her maritime pre-eminence: hence it was evident, that no state which sought opulence and strength, through commercial efforts, acted wisely in provoking to conflict the mistress of the ocean, who could so effectually destroy the trade of her foes: it was, therefore, the interest of France to desist from that hostile policy which had so much obstructed the improvements of her immense resources. Peace with France was no less beneficial to Britain, which had so far consulted her advantage, as to abstain from offensive hostility against her neighbour: within the period of great commercial enterprise in northern and western Europe, England had never gone to war, but to repel aggression, direct or circuitous. Concord being the mutual interest of the parties, Mr. Pitt conceived the noble design of changing the contentious system of policy which had so long prevailed; and the execution, though difficult, he had solid reasons not

Perceives
that peace
and amicable
intercourse
is the in-
terest of
countries.

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Thinks past
enmity not
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surmountable
bar to per-
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to believe impracticable. That hereditary enmity was not an unfurmountable obstacle to reconciliation and close alliance, was clearly demonstrated from the former and recent relations between France and Spain, and between France and Austria. Those powers, which had been the constant enemies of France throughout the seventeenth century, and one of them during more than one half of the eighteenth, were now her fastest friends; why might not permanent amity be established between Britain and her former rival? The most effectual means of inducing the two countries to pursue objects so conducive to their mutual benefit, he thought, would be a commercial intercourse, which should reciprocally increase the value of productive labour. The minister derived his knowledge and philosophy from the purest sources: he sought information, either particular or general, wherever it was to be found authentic and important; and was peculiarly happy in arranging details, and, from either masses or systems, selecting and applying what was best fitted for his purpose. Political œconomy and commercial science he learned from Smith: he agreed with that illustrious writer in his estimate of the reciprocal advantage that might accrue to industrious and skilful nations, from an unfettered trade, which should stimulate their respective efforts. Before he formed his scheme for promoting an intercourse between the two chief nations of the world, he made himself thoroughly acquainted with the state of facts, the actual productions, and the probable resources of the respective countries. The minister possessed that ability and skill in choosing co-adjutors, which

which results from a thorough comprehension of characters, and a nice discernment of the appropriate talents and knowledge, dispositions and conduct, peculiarly adapted to any specific end. For commercial information and science, especially the history and actual state of modern trade, no man exceeded lord Hawkesbury: from that able statesman he derived very important assistance in preparing his scheme. Greatly did he also profit by Mr. Eden, whose acuteness and conversancy with every subject of commerce and diplomatic experience, rendered him a most valuable auxiliary in digesting and composing the plan at home, and the ablest agent for negotiating and concluding an advantageous agreement with France. Eden accordingly repaired to Paris; where he conducted and completed the desired arrangement with the ministers of Louis.

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Seeks the best assistance, and employs the most skilful agents.

The treaty in question established reciprocal liberty of commerce between the two countries. The subjects of each power were to navigate and resort to the dominions of the other, without any disturbance or question, except for transgressing the laws. The prohibitory duties in each kingdom, by enhancing the price, had reciprocally discouraged the sale of their principal commodities; these were now modified to the satisfaction of both by a tariff. The wines of France, to be imported into England, were subjected to no higher duty than the productions of Portugal; the duties on brandies and various other articles were to be lowered in proportion; and the commodities of Britain were to be equally favoured in France. On the same basis of reciprocity were the articles respecting disputes

Principle and details of the treaty.

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between the mercantile, maritime, or other subjects of the two countries, and various details of civil, commercial, and political intercourse were to be adjusted. In whatever related to the lading and unlading of ships, the safety of merchandize, goods and effects, the succession to personal estates, as well as the protection of individuals, their personal liberty, and the administration of justice, the subjects of the two contracting parties were to enjoy in their respective dominions the same privileges, liberties, and rights, as the nation or nations most highly favoured by each. Should hereafter, through inadvertency or otherwise, any infractions or contraventions of the treaty be committed on either side, the friendship and good understanding should not immediately thereupon be interrupted; but this treaty should subsist in all its force, and proper remedies should be procured for removing the inconveniencies, as likewise for the reparation of injuries. If the subjects of either kingdom should be found guilty, they only should be punished and severely chastised. The relative commercial condition and resources, on which Mr. Pitt grounded his conclusions, he generalized into concise propositions. At first sight it appeared, that France had the advantage in the gift of soil and climate, and in the amount of her natural produce; while Britain was on her part confessedly superior in her manufactures and artificial productions. This was their relative condition, and was the precise ground on which he imagined that a valuable correspondence and connection might be established. Having each her own distinct staples; each that which the other wanted,

wanted, and no clashing in the grand outlines of their respective riches; they were like two great traders in different branches, and might enter into a traffic mutually beneficial. The respective princes reserved to themselves the right of revising this treaty after the term of twelve years, to propose and make such alterations as the times and circumstances should have rendered proper or necessary for the commercial interests of their subjects. This revision should be completed in the space of a year, after which the present treaty should be of no effect; but in that event the good harmony and friendly correspondence between the two nations should not suffer the least diminution.

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In a treaty formed on the basis of reciprocal freedom of trade, the advantage to the contracting parties was, and necessarily must be, in the compound rates of their resources and skilful industry. At first sight, from the climate and soil of France, the balance of commercial benefit appeared in favour of that country, and so many politicians reasoned with much plausibility; but Mr. Pitt had profoundly considered the relative circumstances, and justly concluded that the French industry and skill was much more inferior to the British industry and skill, than the French soil and climate were superior to the British soil and climate; and thus, that greater benefit would accrue to this country from the freedom of trade: experience justified his conclusions.

The commercial treaty was the chief object which occupied the public attention when parliament met on the 23d of January 1787. The speech

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Meeting of
parliament,
and the
king's
speech.

from the throne mentioned the tranquil state of Europe, and the friendly dispositions of foreign powers to this country. His majesty informed parliament, that a treaty of navigation and commerce had been concluded between this country and France, and recommended it to the consideration of the houses, under two heads; its tendency to encourage the industry and extension of commerce, and to promote such an amicable intercourse as would give additional permanence to the blessings of peace: these were also the objects which his majesty had in view in other treaties which he was negotiating. A convention was formed between Britain and Spain, respecting the cutting of log-wood: he farther directed their attention to plans, which had been framed by his orders, for transporting to Botany Bay, in New Holland, a number of convicts, in order to remove the inconvenience which arose from the crowded state of the gaols in different parts of the kingdom: he trusted they would also devise regulations for simplifying the public accounts, in various branches of the revenue: he relied upon the uniform continuance of their exertions in pursuit of such objects, as might tend still farther to improve the national resources, and to promote and confirm the welfare and happiness of his people. In discussing the proposed answer to the speech, some general observations were made upon the treaty by Mr. Fox; but they produced no debate, as the minister and his friends reserved their reasonings until the consideration of the subject was properly before the house.

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On the 4th of February the treaty was submitted to parliament. After the minister had explained and supported the object, spirit, and provisions of this treaty, numbers of the opposite side attacked it on a variety of grounds, as relative to commerce, revenue, the naval, and the political interests of Britain. The arguments derived from our manufactures were, they contended, founded on a presumption, that the French character would not admit of equal industry as the English: that opinion was asserted to be unjust: the treaty would facilitate and encourage that contraband trade, which it had been the professed object of Mr. Pitt's policy to suppress: the free access of French ships to the British shores, would be unquestionably by many employed to the purposes of smuggling, and thus the revenue would be greatly injured. By reducing the duties on French wines, we had conceded advantages to France, for which we did not receive an equivalent: we had farther interfered with the Methven treaty, and the interests of our natural ally, Portugal. Respecting the naval operation of the treaty, it was a substitution of a near for a remote market, and requiring short trips would not exercise, nor form nautical skill: but the political effects of the treaty were chiefly reprobated: one argument, often repeated, was founded upon an authority, to which many politicians would bow on the recurrence of precisely similar cases. Mr. Pitt, the elder, having found the country at war with France, had displayed the whole vigour of his genius in measures most fatally hostile to France; therefore it was unwise in any minister to cultivate friendship with

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The treaty
is submitted
to parlia-
ment.

Mr. Fox
and his co-
adjutors op-
pose the
treaty.

Arguments

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France the
unalterable
enemy of
Great Bri-
tain. Mu-
tual interest
can never
eradicate
that senti-
ment.

Every com-
mercial co-
nection with
France has
been inju-
rious to
Britain.

Arguments
for the
treaty.

with France, and particularly wrong in the son of such a father. France was the natural enemy of England, and no sincerity could be expected in any professions of friendship, no stability in any contract: nations which bordered on each other, could never thoroughly agree, for this single reason, that they were neighbours: all history and experience, according to opposition, assured us of the fact. Mr. Fox in particular maintained, that France was the inveterate and unalterable enemy of Great Britain; no mutual interest could possibly eradicate what was deeply rooted in her constitution. The intercourse which this treaty would produce, must be extremely hurtful to the superior national character of England. Evil communication corrupts good manners. The nearer the two nations were drawn into contact, and the more successfully they were invited to mingle with each other, in the same proportion the remaining morals, principles, and vigour of the English national mind, would be enervated and corrupted. No commercial treaty formed between the two countries had ever been beneficial to this country: on the contrary, that which followed the peace of Utrecht would have been extremely injurious, and every mercantile connection with France had been always injurious to England. In defence of the treaty it was maintained, that the comparative character of the English and French manufactures, and artificial productions, would render the free trade more beneficial to this country than to France, notwithstanding her soil, climate, and natural produce. We had agreed by this treaty to take from France, on small duties,

duties, the luxuries of her soil, which, however, the refinement of this country had converted into necessaries. The wines of France, with all their high duties, already found their way to our tables; and was it then a serious injury to admit them on easier terms? The admission of them would not supplant the wines of Portugal or of Spain, but only a useless and pernicious manufacture in our own country. The diminution on brandy was also an eligible measure, and would have a material effect in preventing the contraband trade, in an article so much used. It had been objected, that no beneficial treaty would be formed between this country and France, because no such treaty had ever been formed, and because, on the contrary, a commercial intercourse with her had always been hurtful to England: this reasoning was completely fallacious; it deduced a similar conclusion from totally dissimilar premises. For a long series of years we had no commercial connection with France, and the relative value of the respective productions were totally changed. When a treaty was proposed at the peace of Utrecht, England was extremely deficient in those manufactures in which she now excelled, and much inferior to France in produce; by a free trade she must then have been a great loser, because she would have given much more than she would have received: now she would be a great gainer, because she would receive much more than she gave. The present treaty did not in the smallest degree affect the stipulations with Portugal. The French wines would be still much dearer, notwithstanding the diminution of the duties.

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Denied that
there is any
unalterable
enmity be-
tween
France and
Britain.

duties. In a political view it certainly could be no argument against the adoption of a system of conduct in one species of circumstances, that a contrary system had been pursued with acknowledged wisdom in a different situation of affairs. Although Mr. Pitt the father had, when his country was at war with France, employed the most energetic and successful efforts to be victorious in war, that was no reason that Mr. Pitt the son should not endeavour equally to make the best of existing circumstances, by promoting commerce with the same country when at peace. The minister himself controverted Mr. Fox's position, that France was unalterably the enemy of the country. The existence of eternal enmity was totally inconsistent with the constitution of the human mind, the history of mankind, and the experience of political societies. Every state recorded in history had been at different times in friendship or amity with its several neighbours. The dissension between France and this country has arisen from mistaken ambition on her side; there was no more natural antipathy between an Englishman and a Frenchman, than between a Frenchman and a Spaniard, or a Frenchman and a German. France, after being long hostile to the house of Austria, had at last discovered, that it was much more advantageous for both parties to cultivate peace and harmony, than to impair their respective strength, and exhaust their resources. Hostilities had been carried on between France and Austria, without very long intervals of peace, for two centuries and a half. During the greater part of the seventeenth cen-
tury,

tury, profound peace had subsisted between France and England; there was nothing improbable in an idea that such a system might again prevail; but should war again arise, would the treaty deprive us of our natural watchfulness, or our accustomed strength? On the contrary, as it must enrich the nation, it would also prove the means of enabling her to combat her enemy with more powerful effect: but it was now much less likely that our resources should be called for such a purpose, than at former periods. If ever France and her allies could have expected to overwhelm England, their hopes might have been sanguine in the American war; they had united the whole maritime world to reduce her commerce and her navy, but they had totally failed in reducing our naval power, and sunk her finances to a situation of extreme embarrassment; hence, though it was always the interest of France to avoid war with Great Britain, her present circumstances rendered it more necessary than ever to abstain from hostilities, which, under her embarrassment, would expose her to inevitable bankruptcy. On the other hand, by cultivating a connection with this country, she must perceive the means of recovering from her difficulties. From all these considerations, we might safely infer the sincerity of France; no doubt that country would gain by the treaty; the French would not yield advantages without the expectation of a return: unless the other party derived benefit from the agreement, we could have little hopes of its permanency; but Britain would reap much more advantage. France gained for her wines, and her

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The repeated discomfiture of France, warring against the navy of England, at length taught her the policy of peace.

By the treaty both parties procure a more extensive market for their respective productions, than either could elsewhere.

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her productions, an extensive and opulent market; we did the same to a much greater degree: she procured a market of eight millions of people; we a market of twenty-four millions: France gained this market for her produce, which employed few hands in the preparation, gave small encouragement to navigation, and afforded little to the state; we gained this market for our manufactures, which employed many hundred thousand of our countrymen in collecting the materials from all corners of the world, advanced our maritime strength, and in every article and stage of its progress contributed largely to the state.

The treaty underwent many and various discussions through its passage in both houses; and although there neither was, nor indeed could be, much novelty of argument, as it had been so fully canvassed, yet in both houses it called forward an exhibition of commercial knowledge and philosophy, superior to any that had ever appeared in the British, and consequently in any senate. In the house of commons several young members very eminently distinguished themselves, by speeches for and against the treaty, especially Mr. Grenville on the one side, Mr. Grey and Mr. Windham on the other. In the house of peers, though lord Thurlow, and lord Hawkesbury, lord Loughborough, and lord Carlisle, with other peers on both sides, exerted their respective abilities upon this subject, yet the fullest and most detailed reasonings were presented by the marquis of Lansdown, and the bishop of Landaff. The oration of the former nobleman, in some respects, coincided with
the

the supporters, and in others with the opposers, of the treaty. He with ministers contended on the sound policy of cultivating an amicable intercourse with France; and with the other side, that the reciprocity on which the treaty was said to be founded was merely ideal, and that Britain must greatly lose by the stipulation: these objections were weighty, if well grounded; nevertheless he declared his warm and cordial support of the treaty*.

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The

* An altercation arose from the debate between the marquis and the duke of Richmond: the former had stated the danger of the fortifications of Cherburg, and, while on that subject, had digressed to make a severe animadversion on his grace's plan for fortifying Portsmouth and Plymouth. The duke observed, that the marquis's opinion declared orally and in writing, as witnesses and letters could prove, had, when himself minister, declared his perfect approbation of the plan, to reprobate which he had now deviated from the question. It appeared, however, in investigation, that the marquis had never expressly and explicitly either said or written, that he concurred with the duke of Richmond; his grace and Mr. Pitt, and other hearers, had only inferred his sentiments from his words and conduct, but could not affirm that he had plainly and categorically said, that he approved of the plan. They thought that he had agreed to the plan, because he spoke of it very favourably when consulted on the subject. He had, as first lord of the treasury, included a sum for the proposed fortifications in the estimates of expence for the year. His lordship, however, now declared, that he had always disapproved of the scheme, and challenged his grace to produce a scrap of writing to the contrary. Although, by this declaration, it would appear that those senators were mistaken in their construction of his words and actions, it must be allowed, that their interpretation was, according to the usual rules of reasoning, not very unnatural. The applicability, however, of a general criterion to the explanation of a parti-

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The treaty
is supported
by a great
majority.

The Bishop of Landaff, in his oration, manifested the same vigour of mind and industry of enquiry, which rendered him so eminent in chemistry and theology, and procured the applause of both parties. The treaty was approved by a great majority of both houses; and on the 8th of March an address was presented to both houses, testifying their joint approbation of the treaty with France.

The convention with Spain, to which his majesty's speech had alluded, was of very secondary and subordinate moment, when compared with the treaty that we have been considering; nevertheless, it was by no means unimportant. The agreement in question was concluded the 14th of July * 1786, and chiefly regarded the privilege of cutting logwood. The British possessions on the Musquito shore were ceded in exchange for a tract of land on the Bay of Honduras. The contract produced little animadversion in the house of commons, but underwent severe strictures in the house of lords; the opponents of administration contended, that we certainly could have made a better bargain, than to

a particular case, must depend in a great degree on the peculiar qualities of the subject. The duke of Richmond went so far as to charge his lordship with insincerity; an allegation which the noble peer reprobated with great indignation. In vindicating himself, the marquis of Lansdown asserted, that *OPENNESS was his characteristic*, and that it was solely from the consideration of the unguardedness of his temper, that, by the advice of his friends, he had secluded himself from the world.

* See State Papers.

have

have ceded to Spain a tract of land, at least as large as the whole kingdom of Portugal, which yielded us cotton, indigo, mahogany, and sugar, in exchange for a liberty to cut logwood, and a scanty settlement of twelve miles in extent: it was moreover ungrateful to the British subjects who resided there on the faith of our protection, and who had contributed every effort in their power to assist their country. Ministers replied, that the complaint respecting the value of the cession arose from geographical and statistical inaccuracy. The territory which we relinquished was much less extensive and productive, than lords in opposition apprehended. On the second subject of censure they asserted, that the number of British subjects settled there did not amount to one hundred and forty; and provision was made for the security of their persons and effects: these arguments being satisfactory to the majority of the house, they declared their approbation of the treaty.

One of the subjects recommended to parliament by the speech from the throne, was the consolidation of the customs. The increasing commerce of this country on the one hand, and its accumulated burdens on the other, had so widely exceeded the expectation of our ancestors, and all the grounds of calculation on which they founded their system of finance, that the principles which they adopted, though sufficiently suited to the narrow and confined scale of our former exigencies and resources, were no longer applicable. The consequence of retaining the old principle, under the altered circumstances of the country, had been in several points of view very detrimental to the interests of the na-

Consolidation of the customs.

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tion. The first institution of the subsisting duties of the customs was made by the statute of the twelfth year of king Charles II., under the names of tonnage and poundage; the first, an impost upon wines, measured by the quantity imported; and the second, on the price of all other articles. The last was therefore liable to great inaccuracies: it was not calculated according to the real value of the commodities, but by an arbitrary estimation; perhaps the market-price of the article at the time of imposing the duty: this principle, when once adopted, was pursued in every fresh subsidy: in some instances it had operated, by imposing additional duties calculated at so much per cent. upon the duty already paid; in others it laid a farther impost of the same description on a particular denomination of the commodity; almost all the additional subsidies had been appropriated to some specific fund for the payment of certain annuities: there must, therefore, be a separate calculation for each made at the custom-house; and from the complexity of the whole system, it was scarcely possible that a merchant could be acquainted, by any calculations of his own, with the exact amount of what he was to pay. To remedy this great abuse, Mr. Pitt proposed to abolish all the duties that now subsisted in this confused and complex manner, and to substitute one single duty on each article, amounting, as nearly as possible, to the aggregate of the various subsidies now paid; only where a fraction was found in any of the sums, to change it for the nearest integral number, usually taking the higher rather than the lower. This advance would produce an increase in the revenue to the amount of

of 20,000l. per annum, and lay upon the public a burthen, which must be amply compensated by the relief which the merchants were to experience from the intended alteration. Mr. Pitt had given complete attention to this business; and had not left one person unconsulted from whom any information could be obtained; and the greatest diligence had been used to circulate the plan among the most competent judges of those persons who were immediately concerned in its operation and effects. The proposed scheme caused no debate; the object was so evidently advantageous, and the means so well adapted, as to command the concurrence and approbation of the whole House*; and a bill for the purpose was introduced and passed. On the 26th of April, Mr. Pitt presented to the house of commons a bill, stating, that notorious frauds had been committed in the collection of the tax on post horses, and providing that, as a remedy to the evil, the tax should be farmed. The several districts were to be put up to public auction at the present amount received in each, and at the highest rate which it ever had produced; and it was not doubted there would be many candidates; hence the full value might be expected. Mr. Fox opposed the bill, as tending to enlarge the number of collectors very considerably, and in the same proportion to

* Mr. Burke, who rose immediately after the minister, professed that it did not become him, or those who like him unfortunately felt it to be frequently their duty to oppose the measures of government, to content themselves with a sullen acquiescence; but on the contrary to rise manfully and do justice to the measure, and to return their thanks to its author, on behalf of themselves and their country. See Parliamentary Debates, 1787.

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increase the influence of the crown : it was, besides, argued against the proposed mode of taxation, that it was repugnant to the principles of our constitution, and to the general system of our revenue ; and was the mode adopted under arbitrary governments, and one of the principal sources of oppression in France : the precedent was in the highest degree alarming, and required to be warmly resisted in the outset. To these objections the minister and his friends replied, that although farmers of the revenue contributed, under arbitrary governments, very greatly to the miseries of the people, yet it was not from the nature of their employment, but from the system under which it was exercised. The powers to be given to the farmer were no greater than those at present entrusted to collectors : after considerable discussion, the bill passed both houses without a division.

Application
of the dis-
senters for a
repeal of
the test act.

A subject was introduced into the house of commons, which became repeatedly the object of its consideration in succeeding sessions : this was a proposition for the repeal of the test and corporation acts. The dissenters from the church of England were very considerable, both in number and opulence ; and certain classes of them derived great lustre from the learning and genius of their leaders. Among them there were not a few active, bold, and aspiring men ; these very naturally wished to enjoy the sweets of power, to rise to a political superiority over those to whom they might fancy themselves intellectually superior. Among sectarians, the influence of their ministers is generally greater than under an establishment. The relation between the dissenting pastor and his flock is volun-

tary ; whereas between a clergyman and parishioners it is created by the law of the land. The former has, from his situation, dependent on the liberality of his employers, the strongest motives of interest to accommodate himself to their passions, prejudices, and humours * ; because, if he thwart these, the proceeds of his labours will be much diminished. The latter, being independent of the bounty of those whom the constitution of the country has delegated to his spiritual care, has no interested motive to gratify his parishioners, any farther than is consistent with wisdom and virtue. The sectarian minister, like a tradesman, depends for subsistence on his customers † ; and the sure way of increasing the number of those is obsequiousness ‡. The beneficed clergyman, as a gentleman, may cultivate the good will of his people, and the friendship of the most deserving ; but in paying his court need not stoop beneath a dignified equality. Sectarians also are infinitely more addicted to theological disputations, than members of an established church. The zealous agitators of controversy naturally regard with much veneration the chief professor of their tenets. From these causes, the influence of dissenting preachers over their employers was and must have been very great. It certainly then was very easy for them to render the people zealous and eager to procure privileges so gratifying to human passions, nor were they actually wanting in attempts

* See Hume, vol. iv. p. 29. prefatory to the history of the reformation.

† Ibid. 31.

‡ The reader will observe, that here I merely describe the general tendency of situation to influence conduct.

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Dissenters
favourable
to Mr. Pitt,
and thence
expect his
support.

to pre-dispose the public in their favour. Many of their preachers were literary undertakers, who would write on any or every subject. Doctors Price, Priestley, and some others, furnished ideas, which, by the assistance of dilation, repetition, and prolixity, sent to the world numberless books and pamphlets on the severe policy of the British constitution, which, in its allotment of offices, had required certain standards of qualification and disposition to discharge the respective duties. There were circumstances which they conceived favourable to the attainment of their object. The dissenters had coincided with the majority of the established church, in supporting the minister of the crown, and people against the leader of a confederacy; thence they inferred, that *gratitude* would induce him to support a cause, in the discussion of which he was to be one of the JUDGES; that Mr. Pitt was to be guided by private affection in deliberating on a question of public expediency. The minister was on terms of friendly intercourse with various dissenters, especially Mr. Beaufoy: this consideration, they apprehended, would have great weight in determining the part which he, as a LAWGIVER, was to act. Mr. Fox, from his general eagerness to diminish restraints, had often professed, and uniformly manifested, disapprobation of tests and subscriptions: it was not doubted he would be friendly to the project, the whole dissenting interest, supported by the leaders of the two parties, would, they trusted, produce the desired repeal.

Previous
steps to pre-
dispose the
public in
their favour.

Delegates were appointed to arrange and conduct their plans; these did not directly petition parliament, but first published and dispersed a paper, which

which they called “the case of the protestant dissenters, with reference to the test and corporation acts*.” This treatise exhibited the history of the corporation and test acts; the hardships to which conscientious dissenters were exposed by those restrictive statutes; and endeavoured to demonstrate both the justice and expediency of affording them effectual relief. When this representation explained to the public their apprehension of the predicament in which they stood, the dissenters engaged Mr. Beaufoy to move, that the house should resolve itself into a committee to consider those acts. In introducing this subject, on the 28th of March, the senator in the first place, stated, what were the exceptionable provisions of the law; and in the next, the peculiar period and circumstances of its enactment. The test act required of every person accepting a civil office, or a commission in the army or navy, to take the sacrament within a limited time; and if, without qualifying himself, he continued to occupy any office, or hold any commission, he not only incurred a large pecuniary penalty, but was disabled thenceforth for ever from bringing any action in course of law; from prosecuting a suit in the courts of equity; from being the guardian of a child, or the executor of a deceased person, and receiving any legacy. On the second head, he recapitulated the history of the act, and the noted though despicable artifice by which Charles II. defeated its repeal†. He farther endeavoured to prove, that the dissenters had always been favourable to the present

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Mr. Beaufoy
pleads their
cause in par-
liament.

* See Domestic Literature in the New Annual Review for 1787.

† Hume, vol. viii.

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Lord North,
a moderate
tory, opposes
the applica-
tion, as ini-
mical to the
church.

happy establishment, and that their general conduct had been such as to entitle them to the gratitude and regard of every true patriot. Lord North, who had been lately deprived of the organs of sight, and thereby prevented from regular and constant attendance in parliament, came that day forward to defend the church from apprehended encroachment. His lordship, educated at Oxford, and impressed with the sentiments which that university has uniformly inculcated, was a strenuous supporter of episcopal doctrines. Though too benevolent in disposition and mild in temper for bigotry, he was the warm friend of the rights and privileges of the ecclesiastical establishment, and had always opposed the dissenters when applying for a change. He now declared himself, though attached to the church, the sincere friend of religious liberty. Far should he be from opposing the present motion, if it sought no more than the free and entire exercise of the rights of conscience; but it prayed for the repeal of an act, which was the great bulwark of the constitution, and to which we owed the inestimable blessings of freedom; and recommended a proceeding contrary to the happy experience of a century. It had been said, that the test act was an indignity to the dissenters: but had we not resolved, that no monarch should sit on the throne who refused to comply with the test? If the throne were offered to any prince, who, from motives of conscience, declined this condition, surely the refusal of the throne to that prince would be no indignity. There was no complaint of ecclesiastical tyranny; universal toleration was established; let them therefore guard against change in the church,
nor

nor confound the free exercise of religion with admissibility to civil and military appointments. Mr. Pitt supported the same side of the question; and began by marking the difference between civil and religious liberty on the one hand, and political trusts on the other. The former, every good constitution of government must secure to all its subjects; the latter was bestowed with discrimination, according to individual qualification and disposition, of which the community had the right of judging by any rule that it thought expedient. The test was merely the condition required by the employer from persons to whom he committed a trust. Every master had an unquestionable right to declare the conditions in which he would admit service; and none could be aggrieved by an exclusion arising from himself. The present, therefore, was not a question of grievance and redress, but simply of policy. On this question legislation had only one subject of deliberation, was it expedient, in the present circumstances, sentiments, and principles of the dissenters, for the nation to employ them in certain specified offices? To such an inquiry, every recapitulation of former history was extraneous: a repeal might have been wise in the time of Charles II., and unwise in the reign of George III. The dissenters were, undoubtedly, a body of men, who were entitled to the consideration of parliament; but there was another class equally respectable, and more numerous, whose fears on this occasion would be alarmed. Many members of the church of England conceived, that the ecclesiastical part of our constitution would be seriously injured, and their apprehensions

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Mr. Pitt
opposes it
on the
grounds of
political ex-
pediency.

The test no
infringe-
ment of to-
leration;
merely a
condition.

Of admis-
sibility to
certain of-
fices.

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Eminent
dissenters
avowed
themselves
hostile to
the church,

Therefore
not expedi-
ent to ex-
tend their
power.

The appli-
cation is re-
jected.

ensions were not to be treated lightly. If he were arguing on principles of right, he should not talk of alarm ; but he had already said, he was arguing upon principles of expediency. The church and state were united upon principles of expediency ; and it concerned those, to whom the well-being of the state was entrusted, to take care that the church should not rashly be demolished. The persons who now applied, declared, that they meant nothing political by their application ; but he must look at human actions to find out the springs. Highly as he thought of many of the present dissenters, he could not but observe there were persons among them, who would not admit that any establishment was necessary ; and against such it became the legislature to be upon their guard. Doctor Priestley, whose abilities and learning were very high, and whose opinions were received as oracles by a certain class of dissenters, had proclaimed enmity against the church. Sectarians (he said) were wisely placing as it were, grain by grain, a train of gunpowder, to which the match would one day be laid to blow up the fabric of error, which could never be again raised upon the same foundation. When he saw proceedings, intended to subvert so important a part of our polity, he thought circumspection and vigilance absolutely necessary : when there was an avowed design to sap the fortress, it became the duty of the garrison to secure the outposts : the dissenters already enjoyed every mental freedom to serve God, according to their consciences, in the most ample degree : what they now required, was inexpedient and dangerous. These sentiments deeply impressed the house ; and
on

a division, the proposition of Mr. Beaufoy was negatived by a majority of one hundred and seventy-eight to one hundred.

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Soon after this application, a bill was introduced for granting indulgence to a different species of complainants; these were insolvent debtors. The vast increase of commerce poured opulence on the nation; but to many individuals, unavoidable losses or injudicious speculations, brought bankruptcy and ruin. Luxury, growing with commerce and riches, spread its influence over society; the immense fortunes that were acquired by extortion and speculation in the East, and during the American war, through the prodigal effusion of the public money, stock-jobbing, and other causes, operated upon the minds of many traders, and inspired them with a desire of rapid accumulation. This spirit suggested various schemes, which being much more extensive than the capital that could be employed, failure produced certain ruin. Gaming of every kind was extremely prevalent: the example of some very eminent characters, combining with their winning and impressive manners, infected their intimate associates with this particular vice, and with general extravagance; and that consequence extended itself to many of their political supporters. The metropolis teemed with gambling tradesmen; these became strenuous politicians, who wished to have a share in directing the business of the nation, and that they might deliberate in the tavern, they neglected their shops; imitating those whom they admired, they followed them to their private pastimes; and closed their exertions in the King's Bench or Fleet prisons;

prisons ; and the number of imprisoned debtors, through either misfortune or vice, was extremely great. There can be no wise and just reason for confining a debtor, but to compel payment ; if there be no property concealed, confinement of the debtor cannot restore the creditor's right : were it practicable to compel, in every case, the debtor to give up his effects to the creditor, as from effects not person his reimbursement must proceed, imprisonment * might appear no longer to answer any just purpose to the creditor. The laws of imprisonment for debt were, by many of the most enlightened men, deemed a great blemish in the legis-

* Mr. Burke delivered the following opinion on this important subject, in his address to the electors of Bristol :—
“ There are two capital faults in our law, with relation to civil debts. One is, that every man is presumed solvent ; a presumption, in innumerable cases, directly against truth ; therefore the debtor is ordered, on a supposition of ability and fraud, to be coerced his liberty until he makes payment. By this means, in all cases of civil insolvency, without a pardon from his creditors, he is to be imprisoned for life ; and thus a miserable mistaken invention of artificial science operates to change a civil into a criminal judgment, and to scourge misfortune or indiscretion with a punishment which the law does not inflict on very great crimes. The next fault is, that the inflicting of that punishment is not on the opinion of an equal and a public judge ; but is referred to the arbitrary discretion of a private, nay interested and irritated, individual. He who formally is, and substantially ought to be, the judge, is in reality no more than ministerial, a mere executive instrument of a private man, who is at once judge and party : every idea of judicial order is subverted by this procedure. If the insolvency be no crime, why is it punished with arbitrary imprisonment ? If it be a crime, why is it delivered into private hands to pardon without discretion, or to punish without mercy and without measure ?”

lative

slative code of the country. Cautious, however, not hastily to innovate, lawgivers, instead of changing the principle, had endeavoured to lessen the severity of the operation by temporary expedients. One of these was by insolvent acts, which have been usually passed at periods of various distance, when the prisons of the kingdom were so full, as to be supposed to render them absolutely necessary. The last of these had been passed in the year 1780, and bills of this kind had been repeatedly proposed, but negatived. This year a proposition to a similar effect was made in the house of lords; the chief supporters were lord Kinnaird, the earl of Hopetoun, the duke of Norfolk *, but above all lord Rawdon. This accomplished nobleman we have already seen † distinguished as a soldier; equally excelling in the arts of peace, he was now become eminent as a member of the senate. With his many other virtues, remarkable for humanity, he directed his attention to the alleviation of misery: his lordship supported the liberation of insolvent debtors, both on the ground of mercy and political expediency. Do not confine debtors (he said) to gratify the resentment of creditors! Do not, because one individual is malignant, suffer another to be miserable! By confining insolvent debtors, you prevent them from benefiting themselves, their families, and the community; and you deprive them of every possible

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Bill for the
relief of in-
solvent
debtors.

Enlightened
and liberal
policy of
Lord Raw-
don.

* This nobleman, hitherto mentioned in the history as the earl of Surry, had, about a year before, succeeded to the dukedom by the death of his father. The present duke is the first protestant representative of the family.

† Vol. iii. *passim*.

means

means of indemnifying their creditors. Clauses may be introduced, which would relieve misfortune, without suffering fraud to escape. Lord Thurlow had been uniformly the chief opposer of the several insolvent bills, and now maintained the same ground. His arguments on the subject have been frequently imputed to a severe unmerciful disposition; but whether conclusive or not, when fairly canvassed, they discover no marks of such a spirit; they manifestly arise from a policy, suggested by an extensive view of a commercial country, and the means of encouraging industry and frugality, and restraining idleness and extravagance: whatever opinion we may form of his reasoning, these were evidently his objects. His lordship, to answer theoretical ingenuity, which expatiated on the miseries that a rigorous creditor might inflict on an innocent though unfortunate debtor, stated a simple and broad fact: English creditors, as a collective body, are distinguished for lenity; to support this assertion he appealed to observation and experience; and affirmed, that lawyers and judges, who, in the exercise of their professions, had the most frequent opportunities of knowing the treatment of debtors by creditors, were beyond all others the most deeply impressed with this truth. Lord Mansfield had observed, that for twenty prodigal debtors, there scarcely appeared in the course of law one cruel creditor: the law, as it now stood, discriminated between misfortune and vice: the bankrupt code was instituted for the relief of traders, who failed through unforeseen misfortunes; they were the proper objects of generosity and protection; while,

. on

on the other hand, those who ran in debt, knowing that they should never be able to pay, were certainly fit subjects of that severity, which the law, as it stood, empowered their creditors * to exercise; besides, in the last insolvent act, the preamble had declared, that it was not likely any more such acts should be passed; and thus in a great measure pledged the public faith to creditors: as he was inimical to the insolvent bill, he said he intended to propose several regulations for mitigating the miseries of imprisoned debtors. This bill was negatived, on a division, by a majority of twenty-three to twelve.

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The bill is
negatived.

A question was this session submitted to the house of lords concerning peers of the kingdom of Scotland who acquired British peerages. During the preceding summer, the earl of Abercorn, and the duke of Queensberry, of the kingdom of Scotland, had been called to the dignity of British peers, by the titles of viscount Hamilton, and baron Douglas; notwithstanding which, they continued to sit as representatives of the peerage of Scotland. Lord Stormont contended, that the right of representation was granted to Scottish peers as a recompence for the loss of an hereditary seat in parliament: those who no longer suffered the loss, could therefore no longer be entitled to a share in the compensation. Having recapitulated the history of the union to illustrate his positions, he moved, that the earl of Abercorn and the duke of Queensberry, who had been chosen in the number of the sixteen peers, having been created peers of Great

Inquiry
about
Scottish
peerages.

* Lord Thurlow did not here overturn the objection to a system which makes the party both judge and punisher.

Britain,

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Britain, thereby ceased to sit in that house as representatives of the peerage of Scotland. His lordship rested his principal argument on a resolution of the house of lords, which was passed in January 1709, that a peer of Scotland, sitting in the parliament of Great Britain, by virtue of a patent passed since the union, had no right to vote in the election of the sixteen peers of Scotland. From this opinion of the house, declaring that such peers could not choose representatives, his lordship inferred, that they could not be representatives themselves. Lord Loughborough supported this constructive interpretation: lord Thurlow, on the contrary, maintained, that a resolution of either house did not constitute the law of the land; and that they ought to abide by that law, according to its literal meaning. Another debate soon after took place on a question, nearly connected with this, but to which the resolution of 1709 more directly applied: whether British peers, created since the union, could vote at the election of a Scottish representative: both sides were supported and opposed on the same grounds as in the foregoing case; and both motions were negatived*.

Magnanimous sacrifice by the prince of Wales, of splendor to justice.

A subject equally interesting and important at this time attracted the public attention, and underwent a discussion in the house of commons. The prince of Wales, amiable, engaging, and accomplished, with a vigorous understanding, possessed

* At the election of the earl of Selkirk and lord Kinnaird, to represent the peerage of Scotland, in the room of the duke of Queensberry and the earl of Abercorn, the dukes of Queensberry and Gordon had given their votes as peers of Scotland.

strong

strong affections, and was not without that disposition to pleasure which so often accompanies the sensibility and animation of youth, especially in such rank and circumstances as easily afford the objects of pursuit and the means of attainment. Attached to the fair sex, the manly beauty of his face and person, apart from his other advantages, procured him, in the susceptible hearts of his countrywomen, incitements, which while it is admitted as a moral proposition that ascetic virtue ought to have resisted, it must be allowed as an historical fact, that such virtue is not very common in young men of twenty-four. Generous by disposition, the prince was munificent in bounty; social and elegant, he was sumptuous in hospitality: much connected with the chief characters of opposition, he partook of amusements, which constituted the favourite recreation of some of the most illustrious men of the party. The effect of so great an additional source of expenditure to his convivial splendor and expanded generosity, was, that his income did not prove sufficient, and that he had before summer 1786 incurred a very considerable debt. Finding himself in such circumstances, and desirous of rendering justice to his creditors, his highness resolved to suppress the establishment of his household and every useless expence, and to save from his income its greater portion, to be applied by trustees for the liquidation of his incumbrances. He had hitherto, like many other persons of rank and fortune, trained running horses for Newmarket, and the other places of public contention. His racers, his hunters, and even his coach-horses, were now sold by public auction.

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Situation of
his high-
ness.

The buildings of Carlton-house were stopped, and some of the principal rooms shut up from use; and the heir of the crown retired from the magnificence of his station to do justice to his creditors. This conduct in itself did the highest honour to the sentiments and rectitude of the prince; but a consideration totally irrelative, entered into the estimate which many formed of its merits. His highness had, in the several objects of his attachment, displayed a discriminating selection, which required the union of mental qualifications with corporeal graces. The lady who at this time occupied the principal share of his attention, was Mrs. Fitzherbert; a woman who, besides the charms and fascinations of beauty and accomplishments, possessed a very respectable character: from this last circumstance a report originated, that greatly interested the public: one relation being presumed, was justified on the part of the lady by the presumption of another. It was currently reported, that the ceremony of marriage between Mrs. Fitzherbert and her lover had been privately performed; and as she was of the Roman catholic persuasion, that the officiating clergyman was a priest of her own religion. As a legal contract, no such marriage could have been concluded, according to the written statutes which regard the royal family; as a matter of fact, such a ceremony might have been performed, but the belief that it actually took place, was totally inconsistent with a just and candid estimation of the prince's character: it proceeded on one of two suppositions; either that he disregarded his own particular station, under its constitutional limits and prescrip-

prescriptions, and the recent laws enacted respecting the royal family, or that he had consented to an appearance which he well knew could not be valid; and thus practised deception on the other party. Improbable as the report was in its subject, and totally unsupported by any evidence, nevertheless it was very prevalent, and created considerable alarm. The prince's friends had expected an interference from a still higher quarter to extricate him from his pecuniary difficulties. Finding no measure of this kind in agitation, and from other incidents inferring disapprobation on the part of the father, many imputed the apprehended coldness to dissatisfaction with certain portions of the son's conduct, especially his close connection with that party which opposed the ministers of his majesty's choice, who had been appointed under so very peculiar circumstances; and not a few attributed some share of the alleged displeasure to the abovementioned report. From July 1786 to April 1787, these topics continued greatly to engross the thoughts and conversation of the public; but had not been deemed fit subjects for parliamentary consideration. His highness now authorized Mr. Alderman Newnham to represent to the house of commons his embarrassed situation. On the 20th of April that gentleman opened the business: he previously asked Mr. Pitt, if he had any design of bringing forward a motion for the relief of the prince; and being answered that he had received no commands from the king on the subject, the alderman gave notice, that, on the 24th of May, he should make a motion to that effect. This intimation excited

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much anxiety in the house, as it seemed to lead to such interesting discussions. Mr. Newnham, on one of the intervening days, explained the precise nature of his motion; which was to address the king, praying him to take into his consideration the derangement of the prince's affairs; and to grant him such relief as his wisdom should deem expedient and suitable; and pledging the house to make good the same. Mr. Pitt earnestly wished that the motion should not be brought forward: there were circumstances (he said) respecting the pecuniary concerns of the prince, that would render the present proposition inimical to the object of its author: the application ought to originate elsewhere, and not in the house: a correspondence had taken place between the party principally concerned, and another personage, respecting financial embarrassments. Mr. Pitt, with his usual closeness, kept to the subject which was introduced by Mr. Newnham; but some of the most zealous supporters of administration introduced an extraneous topic, in an allusion to the prevailing rumours. Messrs. Fox and Sheridan reprobated the report to which this insinuation referred; and, at the next meeting of the house, Mr. Fox declared he had authority from the prince to contradict the allegation. In law, as Mr. Fox observed, it could not take place; and in fact, Mr. Fox pledged the veracity of his highness that it had not taken place. This public disavowal, at the instance of the heir apparent, afforded very great satisfaction to the whole house. On recurring to his pecuniary situation, Mr. Fox declared, that the prince was willing

ling to give a general and fair account of his debts ; and if any part of it was doubted, he would present a clear explanation of the particulars to the king or his ministers. He had not the smallest objection to afford the house every possible satisfaction ; and there was not a circumstance of his life which he was ashamed to have known.

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Meanwhile, interviews took place between Mr. Dundas and his highness ; and the following day between the minister and the prince. Mr. Newnham being made acquainted with the result, on the day on which the motion was intended to be made, declared it was no longer necessary. About a fortnight afterwards, a message from the king was delivered to parliament, stating, that his majesty with great concern acquainted them, that the prince had incurred a very large debt, which, if left to be discharged out of his annual income, would render it impossible for him to support an establishment that would be suited to his rank and station. His majesty was induced to the present application by his paternal affection to the prince of Wales ; he could not, however, desire the assistance of parliament, but on a well-grounded conviction that the prince would avoid contracting any debts in future. With a view to this object, the king had directed a sum of 10,000*l.* to be paid out of the civil list, in addition to his former allowance ; he had the satisfaction to observe, that the prince had given the fullest assurance of his determination to confine his future expences within his income, and had settled a plan, and fixed an order in his oeconomy, which, it was trusted, would effectually

Satisfacto-
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Proceedings
respecting
Mr. Hastings.

secure the due execution of his intentions. He farther recommended to the commons to direct, that the works of Carlton-house should be properly finished. In answer to this message, 161,000l. were voted for the payment of the prince's debts, and 20,000l. for the completion of his palace.

The conduct of Mr. Hastings continued to occupy the attention of parliament, and produced an extraordinary display of abilities. One charge of great importance had been decided against the late governor-general: the event of the accusation respecting Cheyt Sing, had surprised and alarmed Mr. Hastings and his friends. Many supporters of administration regarded the conduct of the accused in a very favourable light; thence his advocates seem to have inferred, that Mr. Pitt entertained a similar opinion. One of the most important qualities of a great minister is, that secrecy which avoids the communication of sentiments or intentions, unless prudence admit or duty require that they should be manifested. This self-command, the firm mind of Mr. Pitt possesses in a very high degree; and no artifice can discover what he resolves to conceal. In the present case he studied the charges separately, and, as became a judge, abstained from publishing his opinion, until he was prepared to deliver judgment. Mr. Hastings, therefore, saw that the vote of the prime minister would depend entirely on the view which he took of the respective charges; and that in cases comprehending probable grounds both of blame and justification, it might be doubtful what his sentence might be on some of the subsequent accusations.

fations. The authority, he was aware, of so highly prized talents and integrity, would be great with those who, hesitating between contending probabilities, found a difficulty themselves in forming a decisive opinion. Much more anxiety and doubt now, therefore, displayed themselves in the friends of Mr. Hastings, than when Major Scott, in the exultation of anticipated victory, had so eagerly invited Mr. Burke to the combat. The press teemed with defences of the late governor general; either the spontaneous effusions of conviction and friendship, or the purchased productions of literary ability: the former were more disinterested in the motive; the latter more successful in the execution. Some of Mr. Hastings's friends, indeed, very injudiciously, as well as uncandidly, ascribed bad or frivolous motives to the chief men on both sides of the house who voted for the impeachment. They asserted, that Mr. Burke was actuated by resentment; that Messrs. Fox, Sheridan, Windham, Adam, Anstruther, Grey, sir Gilbert Elliot, and other members of opposition, merely wished to gratify Burke, and to attack a man whom they thought favoured by the court and some of the ministers*; and that leading men of administration were moved by jealousy of Mr. Hastings's influence. Apprehending those advocates to be convinced, that the person whose cause they so warmly espoused was innocent, and also able to prove his innocence, the impartial reader must deem them

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Writings in
his favour.

* See pamphlets in favour of Mr. Hastings *passim*; also periodical works, especially a newspaper called the World.

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extremely imprudent, and indeed unwise in resting his defence upon extraneous grounds. This imputation was uncandid, because it assigned unjustifiable motives without proof, or even plausible argument. The motive ascribed to the principal accuser was virulent resentment, because a friend of his had been promoted by Hastings; but the alleged cause is not adequate to the effect. That Mr. Burke, or any man, would undertake so laborious a task, which required such minuteness of investigation concerning intricate details, the materials of which were to be fetched from such a distance, with so great and powerful a body inimical to an inquiry, merely because his friend had been slighted, is hardly within the compass of credibility: the same observations will apply to all the other prosecutors, as far as they were concerned. As to the jealousy of ministers, where can we find the grounds for such a passion in the relative situation of these and of Mr. Hastings? Fully admitting extraordinary talents and also meritorious conduct in the political saviour of India, can a reader discover any official situation which he was likely to fill, that could in the smallest degree interfere with the power and influence of the ministers in question? But the hired pleaders for Mr. Hastings, being much more accustomed to reasoning, defended him on stronger grounds. Instead of forming hypotheses concerning the *motives of the accusers*, they adduced arguments from the CONDUCT OF THE ACCUSED, which, in detailed series, principle and system, they justified by the circumstances in which he was placed, and illustrated by the effects that his exertions produced.

duced. These two classes of defenders had each considerable success; the first with the weak and undistinguishing; the second with men of discernment and abilities; and the majority of the nation was inimical to the impeachment.

Such was the state of the public opinion, when one most powerful effort of eloquence diffused quite different sentiments through the kingdom; and presented Mr. Hastings as an atrocious criminal. This was the celebrated speech on the charge of the Begums.

An opinion long prevailed among literary men, that though Britons surpass the ancients in knowledge and philosophy; equal them in epic, and excel them in dramatic poetry; yet they are inferior in eloquence. Writers of transcendent talents, distinguished taste, and profound erudition, deem this notion so evident as not to require any discussion: they take the fact for granted, and confine their inquiries to the cause*. Great ingenuity is employed in comparing the fields of ancient and modern oratory, and discovering motives that led to much more powerful and impressive exertions among the Greeks and Romans, than any that influence British speakers: hence (say Hume and Blair) no Demosthenes or Cicero arises in a modern senate. A careful examiner of the eloquence which adorns the parliamentary history of the present reign, may probably doubt the truth of this assertion: he who peruses the orations of the elder or younger Pitt, Burke, or Fox, may hesitate

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The majority of the nation is adverse to the impeachment.

Eloquence gives a contrary turn to public opinion.

British eloquence.

* See Hume's Essay on Eloquence; see also Blair's Lectures, lect. xxvi.; and *Man of the Moon*, by Dr. William Thomson.

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before he will determine that they are surpassed by either Cicero or Demosthenes. It is, indeed, in the supreme excellencies of the Roman or Grecian orator, that they are most nearly equalled by British senators. Like Demosthenes*, especially, the highest of our orators, are much less eminent for rhetorical flourishes, than for clear and forcible statement of important facts; combination of whatever illustrates the question, or promotes the measure proposed; comprehensive views of the situation, intentions, and interests of the parties concerned; energetic reasoning appropriated to the point at issue; and application of forcible motives to impel hearers to the counsels and conduct which the speaker desires. Eloquence, to be efficacious, must be adapted to the sentiments and knowledge of the persons to whom it is addressed; the same species and mode would not suit informed and enlightened gentlemen of the British house of commons, and the populace which constituted so great a part of the Grecian and Roman assemblies. The same genius and wisdom which enabled and directed Demosthenes to perform such intellectual wonders, empowered and guided him to adapt his oratory to the feelings and capacity of his audience: the acuteness and ingenuity of the Athenian meetings did not admit of much tinsel, instead of sterling value; nevertheless, they were in many respects a mere mob; consequently, there was sometimes room for substituting impression for conviction;

* Of British orators Mr. Fox unquestionably bears the nearest resemblance to the Athenian in materials, spirit, and expression; and equals him in force and in fire, but is less attentive to luminous arrangement.

addressing their feelings instead of their understandings; their weakness instead of their strength. Demosthenes, in order to carry the most beneficial plans into execution, was often obliged to soothe and cajole them; and for that purpose occasionally to admit into his discourses ornaments, which his own austere, strong, and chaste judgment would have induced him to reprobate. British eloquence is rather unlike to ancient in some of the subordinate instruments*, than unequal in the combination

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* That, in point of action, ancient orators far surpass modern, is deemed one of those critical observations, which it would be equally superfluous to illustrate, as absurd to controvert; a common inference from the allowed superiority of action is greater excellence of oratory; and the noted saying of the Roman is often quoted to prove, that gesticulation is the primary constituent of eloquence. One of the wisest men that has written on that or any other subject, views the importance of action in a different light. "It is (says Dr. Johnson) a complaint which has been made from time to time, and which seems to have lately become more frequent, that *English* oratory, however forcible in argument, or elegant in expression, is deficient and inefficacious, because our speakers want the grace and energy of action. Among the numerous projectors who are desirous to refine our manners, and improve our faculties, some are willing to supply the deficiency of our speakers: we have had more than one exhortation to study the neglected art of moving the passions; and have been encouraged to believe, that our tongues, however feeble in themselves, may, *by the help of our hands and legs*, obtain an uncontrovertible dominion over the most stubborn audience, animate the insensible, engage the careless, force tears from the obdurate, and money from the avaricious. If, by sleight of hand, or nimbleness of foot, all these wonders can be performed, he that shall neglect to attain the free use of his limbs, may be justly censured as criminally lazy: but we are afraid that no specimen of such effects will easily

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Speech of
Mr. Sheri-
dan on the
conduct of
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tings to-
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tion of strong reasoning, vivid imagery, and pathetic exhibition; which passing through the head affects the heart, and influences the conduct: the operation and result of oratory are no less vigorous and effectual in Britain, than in Rome or Athens. These observations, though somewhat digressive, will not, I trust, be accounted foreign to the subject of our narrative, that now comes to a display of eloquence, which has, perhaps, never been surpassed in ancient or modern times.

On the 7th of February Mr. Sheridan opened the third article of accusation against Mr. Hastings; which was his conduct towards the Begums*, or dowager princesses of Oude. The introduction attacked a ground of defence chosen by many advocates of Mr. Hastings, that the successful result of his administration amounted to a sufficient justification of his conduct: this principle the speaker reprobated, as contrary to every rule of natural and christian morals, which both taught, in the most unequivocal language, that wicked means were not to be employed for the purpose of accomplishing desirable ends; it was, moreover, a new and base sophism in the maxims of judicial inquiry, that crimes might be compounded, and that fortunate

easily be shewn. If we could once find a speaker in *'Change-Alley*, raising the price of stocks by the power of persuasive gestures, we should very zealously recommend the study of his art; but having never seen any action by which language was much assisted, we have been hitherto inclined to doubt whether our countrymen are not blamed too hastily for their calm and motionless utterance." Idler, No. 90.

* See vol. iii. of this history, chap. xxix.

events

events were a full and complete set-off against oppression, corruption, breach of faith, speculation, and treachery. The conduct of the house of commons, during the preceding year, was guided by the soundest principles of jurisprudence; they had asserted, that there were acts of moral turpitude, which no political necessity could warrant; and proved to the world, that, however degenerate an example some of the British subjects had exhibited in India, the people of England, collectively, speaking and acting by their representatives, felt, as men should feel on such an occasion: they had demonstrated themselves superior to the presumptuous pretensions that were advanced in favour of this pillar of India, this corner-stone of our strength in the East, this talisman of the British territories in Asia, whose character was said to be above censure, and whose conduct was not within the reach of suspicion. After this conciliatory exordium, the orator proceeded to rouse the attention of his hearers, by a concise but striking outline of the nature and magnitude of the subject, which he was about to submit to their consideration. The present charge he stated to be replete with criminality of the blackest die, tyranny the most vile and premeditated, corruption the most open and shameless, oppression the most severe and grinding, and cruelty the most hard and unparalleled. He professed to God, that he felt in his own bosom the strongest personal conviction on the present subject. It was upon that conviction that he believed the conduct of Mr. Hastings, in regard to the nabob of Oude, and to the Begums, comprehended in it every

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every species of human offence. He had proved himself guilty of rapacity, at once violent and insatiable; of treachery, cool and premeditated; of oppression, useless and unprovoked; of breach of faith, unwarranted and base; of cruelty unmanly and unmerciful! These were the crimes of which his soul and conscience arraigned Mr. Hastings, and which he trusted he should demonstrate to the satisfaction of every hearer. He was far from meaning to rest the charges upon assertion, or upon the warm expressions which the impulse of wounded feelings might produce: he would establish every part of the accusation by the most unanswerable proof, and the most unquestionable evidence. He would support every fact by a testimony, which few would venture to contradict, that of Mr. Hastings himself. As there were persons ready to stand up advocates for the late governor-general, he challenged these to watch every particle of the accusations which he should advance: he desired credit for no fact which he did not prove beyond the possibility of refutation.

Mr. Hastings had endeavoured to establish, that the treasures of the Begums were not private property, but belonged to the nabob; that the real proprietor had a right to reclaim his own property, whenever he chose; and actually had resumed it for the purpose of liquidating his debts to the East India company. To controvert this assertion he quoted the mohammedan law, and decisions upon that law concerning this very case; the amount was, that women, on the death of their husbands, are entitled only to the property within the zenana or harem where they

they lived. This opinion had been fully admitted by the council of Calcutta; the Begums retained only the treasures which were within the harems, and relinquished every other property to the reigning prince. The British government of India at the time admitted, and even guaranteed the tenure by which the Begums held this residue of effects; that property, therefore, was their own, and not the nabob's; it might be plundered, but could not be justly reclaimed. Mr. Hastings, in mitigation of his own severities, mistated the principles of mohammedan law, as if he meant to insinuate, that there was something in the eastern codes which rendered it impious in a son not to plunder his mother. From these arguments, to establish that the property was the right of the Begums, and consequently the seizure a violation of rights, the orator proceeded to the reasons which had been adduced for appropriating the treasures of the princesses: here, he rested his inference on the report of the governor general himself. The Begums had at all times given disturbance to the nabob; they had long manifested a spirit hostile to his and to the English government; they had excited the Zemindars to revolt; and they were accessory to the insurrection at Benares. Each of these allegations was sufficiently disproved by Mr. Hastings himself; who made it appear, that on the contrary they had particularly distinguished themselves by their friendship with the English, and by the various good offices which they rendered to the government. Mr. Hastings left Calcutta in 1781, and proceeded to Lucknow, as he said himself, with

with two great objects in his mind, Benares and Oude. What was the nature of these boasted resources? They resembled the equitable alternative of a highwayman, who, in going forth in the evening, was held in suspense which of his resources to prefer, Bagshot or Hounslow. In such a state of generous irresolution did Mr. Hastings proceed to Benares and Oude: at Benares he failed in his pecuniary object; then and not till then, not on account of any ancient enmities shewn by the Begums; not in resentment for any old disturbances; but because he had failed in one place, and had but two in prospect, did he conceive the base expedient of plundering these aged women. To carry his scheme into execution, Mr. Hastings, said his eloquent accuser, formed the atrocious design of instigating a son against his mother, of sacrificing female dignity and distress to parricide and plunder. At Chunar was that infamous treaty concerted; in which, among other articles, Mr. Hastings had stipulated with one whom he called an independent prince, that, as great distress had arisen to the nabob's government from the military power and dominion assumed by the dowager princesses he be permitted to re-assume such of their lands as he may deem to be necessary. From the plan, the accuser proceeded to the execution: no sooner was this foundation of inquiry established, in violation of the pledged faith and solemn guarantee of the British government: no sooner had Mr. Hastings determined to invade the substance of equity, than he resolved to avail himself of judicial forms; and accordingly dispatched a messenger for the chief justice

justice of India, to assist him in perpetrating the violations he had projected. Sir Elijah Impey being arrived, Mr. Hastings, with much art, proposed a question of opinion, involving an unsubstantiated fact, in order to obtain a surreptitious approbation of the measure he had predetermined to adopt;—the begums being in actual rebellion, might not the nabob confiscate their property? “Most undoubtedly!” was the ready answer of the friendly judge. Not a syllable of inquiry intervened, as to the existence of the imputed revolt; not a moment’s pause as to the ill purposes, to which the decision of a chief justice might be perverted. It was not the office of a friend to mix the grave caution and cold circumspection of a judge, with an opinion taken in such circumstances; and sir Elijah had previously declared, that he gave his advice, not as a judge, but as a friend; a character which he equally preferred in the strange office that he undertook, of collecting justificatory affidavits on the subject of Benares. It is (said the orator) curious to reflect on the whole of sir Elijah’s circuit at that perilous time: he stated his desire of relaxing from the fatigues of office, and unbending his mind in a party of health and pleasure; yet, wisely apprehending, that too sudden relaxation might defeat its object, he contrived to mix some concerns of business with his amusements. In his little airing of nine hundred miles, great part of which he travelled post, escorted by an army, he selected those very situations where insurrection subsisted, and rebellion was threatened; and had not only delivered his

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deep and curious researches into the laws of nations and treaties, in the capacity of the oriental Grotius, whom Mr. Hastings was to study, but also appeared in the humbler and more practical situation of a collector of *ex parte* evidence: in the former quality his opinion was the premature sanction for plundering the begums; in the latter character he became the posthumous supporter of the expulsion and pillage of the rajah Cheyt Sing. Acting on an unproved fact, on a position as ideal as a *datum* of the duke of Richmond, he did not hesitate, in the first instance, to lend his authority to an unlimited persecution; in the latter, he did not disdain to scud about India, like an itinerant informer, with a pedlar's pack of garbled evidence and surreptitious affidavits. With a generous oblivion of duty and honour, with a proud sense of having authorized all future rapacity, and sanctioned all past oppression, this friendly judge proceeded on his circuit of health and ease: while the governor-general issued his orders to plunder the begums of their treasure, sir Elijah pursued his progress, and explored a country, that presented a speaking picture of hunger and nakedness, in quest of objects best suited to his feelings; in anxious search of calamities most akin to his invalid imagination: thus, at the same moment that the sword of government was turned to an assassin's dagger, the pure ermine of justice was stained and soiled with the basest contamination. Such were the circumstances, under which Mr. Hastings completed the treaty of Chunar; a treaty which may challenge all the treaties that ever existed, for contain-

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ing in the smallest compass the most extensive treachery. An apology adduced by Mr. Hastings for his conduct is, that the begums resisted the resumption of the Jaghires: the amount of this charge is, that these poor old women attempted to prevent robbery. Could any thing be more absurd, than to accuse persons of endeavouring to preserve their property from plunder? But the fact is, they made no resistance; they well knew that their feeble efforts could not restrain the force of the plunderer: but, Mr. Hastings farther added, the begums complained that they had suffered injustice. “God of heaven! had they not a right to complain? After the violation of a solemn treaty, plundered of their property, and on the eve of the last extremity of misery, were they to be deprived of the ultimate resource of impotent wretchedness, lamentation and regret? Was it a crime that they should croud together in fluttering trepidation, like a flock of helpless birds, on seeing the felon kite, who, having darted at one devoted victim and missed his aim, singled out a new object, and was springing on his prey with redoubled vigour in his wing, and keener vengeance in his eye?” After the eloquence of Sheridan had exhibited such a view of the acts of the accused, he proceeded to his general character. “It has (he said) been advanced by admirers of Mr. Hastings, who are not so implicit as to give unqualified applause to his crimes, that they found an apology for their atrocity in the greatness of his mind. To estimate the solidity of such a defence, it is sufficient to consider wherein this prepossessing distinction, this capti-

vating characteristic consists : is it not solely to be traced in great actions directed to great ends ? In them only are we to search for true magnanimity ; to them only can we affix the splendor and the honours of true greatness. There is, indeed, another species of greatness, which displays itself in boldly conceiving a bad measure, and undauntedly pursuing it to its accomplishment. Had Mr. Hastings the merit of exhibiting either of these ? There was nothing great, nothing magnanimous, nothing open, nothing direct, in his measures or his mind : on the contrary, he pursued the worst objects by the worst means ; his course was an eternal deviation from rectitude : at one time he tyrannized over the will, and at another time deluded the understanding ; he was by turns a Dionysius and a Scapin : as well might the writhing obliquity of the serpent be compared to the direct path of the arrow, as the duplicity of Mr. Hastings's ambition to the simple steadiness of genuine magnanimity ; in his mind all was shuffling, ambiguous, dark, insidious, and little ; nothing simple, nothing unmixed ; all affected plainness and actual dissimulation : he was an heterogeneous mass of contradictory qualities, with nothing great but his crimes, and those contrasted by the littleness of his motives ; which at once denoted his profligacy and his meanness, and marked him for a traitor and a juggler : in his very style of writing there was the same mixture of vicious contrarieties ; the most groveling ideas he conveyed in the most inflated language ; giving mock consequence to low cavils, and uttering quibbles in heroics ; so that his compositions

disgust

disgust the taste of the understanding, as much as his actions excite the abhorrence of the soul. The same character pervaded every department of his government; alike in the military and the political line, we may observe auctioneering ambassadors, and trading generals: we saw a revolution brought about by an affidavit; an army employed in executing an arrest; a town besieged on a note of hand; and a prince dethroned for the balance of an account. Thus a government was exhibited, uniting the mock majesty of a bloody sceptre, and the little traffic of a merchant's counting-house; wielding a truncheon with one hand, and picking a pocket with the other." This energetic, grand, and splendid display of eloquence was closed by the following peroration: "Factions exist in this house, and there is scarcely a subject on which we are not broken and divided into sects; habits, connections, parties, all lead to diversity of opinion: but when inhumanity presents itself to our observation, it finds no division in the representatives of the British people; we attack it as our common enemy; and conceiving that the character of the country is involved, in our zeal for the destruction of cruelty, we quit not our undertaking till it be completely overthrown. It is not allowed to this assembly to behold the objects of our compassion and benevolence in the present extensive inquiry: we cannot contemplate the workings of their hearts, the quivering lips, the trickling tears, the loud yet tremulous joys of the millions, whom our vote of this night will for ever save from the cruelty of corrupted power: but, though we cannot directly

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see the effect, is not the true enjoyment of our benevolence increased, by its being conferred unseen? Will not the omnipotence of Britain be demonstrated to the wonder of nations, by stretching its mighty arm across the deep, and saving by its fiat distant millions from destruction? And will the blessings of the people dissipate in the empty air? No. If I may dare use the figure, they will constitute heaven itself their proxy, to receive for them the blessings of their pious thanksgiving, and the prayers their gratitude will dictate!"

Such is the outline and chief substance of this celebrated speech, whose delivery occupied the extraordinary length of five hours and a half; during which its excellence was uniform in vivid, animated, and fervid description of conduct, that excited the various emotions of the human heart * for the alleged sufferers, and against the alleged tyrant: filled the hearers with contempt and scorn against exhibited meanness, detestation of represented atrocity, and called their vengeance upon powerful guilt overwhelming helpless innocence.

* The late Mr. Logan, well known for his literary efforts, and author of a most masterly defence of Mr. Hastings, went that day to the house of commons, prepossessed for the accused and against his accuser. At the expiration of the first hour he said to a friend, "All this is declamatory assertion without proof:" when the second was finished; "This is a most wonderful oration:" at the close of the third; "Mr. Hastings has acted very unjustifiably:" the fourth; "Mr. Hastings is a most atrocious criminal:" and at last; "Of all monsters of iniquity, the most enormous is Warren Hastings!" This I was told by Mr. Peter Stewart, proprietor of the Oracle, who was present.

Never

Never was Mr. Sheridan surpassed by any orator in brilliant and irresistible eloquence, nor has he often been equalled in ingenuity and acuteness of deduction from the premises which he assumed. If the governor-general had acted in the mode, and from the motives represented with so impressive effect by Mr. Sheridan, he would have certainly deserved to have been ranked among all the Caligulas, Neros, and Caracallas, that had ever scourged humanity by lawless power; with all the Jonathan Wilds and Scapins, that, by fraud and imposture, supplied the want of force to perpetrate villainy. The speech so manifestly astonished the house, that Mr. Pitt proposed to adjourn their meeting without coming to a deliberation, until they should be sufficiently recovered to distinguish the blaze of eloquence from the light of truth: throughout the country the impression was little less powerful; and great numbers conceived Hastings as guilty as he was represented by transcendent genius. To the commons there appeared so probable grounds of accusation, as to produce a vote of one hundred and seventy-five to sixty-eight, for impeaching Mr. Hastings upon the third charge: several other inferior charges were voted to contain grounds of impeachment. On the 2d of April various other accusations were examined, and the impeachment was at length voted; when the form in which that inquest should be carried on, became a subject of consideration. Mr. Fox proposed, that there should be a general charge of impeachment, and that the house, on acquainting the lords with their intention, should inform them that they were preparing articles which they would present with all convenient dis-

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patch; reserving to themselves the constitutional rights of supplying more heads, after they had gone through the whole. Mr. Pitt proposed they should separate and analyze the charges, since the accusation consisted of a diffuse and complicated mass; of many allegations which had not been substantiated, and of many facts which could not be considered as criminal; that thus each part should be tried by its distinct and individual merits. Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan coincided with the minister; and his plan was adopted. Mr. Hastings now made, through Major Scott, an application to the house, that if they resolved there was ground for impeachment, they would vote that he should be brought to trial: he trusted that the house of commons would not suffer his name to be branded upon their records, without allowing him at the same time the only legal means of effacing the stigma.

A committee was formed to prepare articles of impeachment against Warren Hastings, esq. and empowered to send for persons, papers, and records. The committee consisted of Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Pelham, sir James Erskine, Mr. Windham, Mr. St. John, Mr. Francis, sir Gilbert Elliot, sir Grey Cooper, Mr. Frederic Montague, Mr. Wellbore Ellis, general Burgoyne, colonel North, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Grey, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Adam, Mr. Dudley Long, and lord Maitland.

The commons impeach Warren Hastings at the bar of the house of peers,

On the 20th of May, Mr. Edmund Burke went in the name of the house of commons, and of all the commons of Great Britain, to the bar of the house of lords, and impeached Mr. Hastings of high crimes and misdemeanors; and acquainted the

the lords, that the commons would, with all convenient speed, exhibit articles against him, and make good the same. The articles were eight in number: the charge of Cheyt Sing, the Begums, charges of Farruckahad, the contracts, Fizulla Khan, the presents, the revenues, and misdemeanors in Oude. At the instance of Mr. Burke, Mr. Hastings was taken into custody by the serjeant at arms; and being immediately conducted to the bar of the house of lords, was delivered to the gentleman usher of the black rod. Upon the motion of the lord chancellor he was admitted to bail, himself in 20,000*l.* and two sureties, Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Sumner, in 10,000*l.* each, and was ordered to deliver in an answer to the articles of impeachment in one month from that time, or upon the second day of the next session of parliament*.

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On the 20th of April the financial accounts and arrangements of the year were brought forward. The minister opened the subject, by testifying the high satisfaction that he felt, and which he doubted not the house would share, when he laid before them such an account of our finances, as would justify his former statements, reasonings, and predictions. The public services were to be provided for without additional imposts, although a very bad season in the West Indies had caused a defalcation in the customs to the amount of 350,000*l.*

Supplies.

Favourable
state of the
finances.

* See Annual Register for 1787; British and foreign history, p. 148.

On

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Mr. Dundas brings forward the financial state of British India.

On the 7th of May, Mr. Dundas, as president of the board of controul, brought forward the financial state of British India. He conceived it (he said) highly improper that any part of the empire should be in the receipt of a revenue of five millions, and maintain an army of seventy or eighty thousand men, without its being known to the house of commons how that revenue was disbursed, and why such an establishment was supported. The debt in India amounted to nine millions, the revenue of the last year afforded a surplus of 1,800,000l., and the company would be able to discharge their debt in this country in the year 1790. Having clearly and concisely stated these facts and opinions, Mr. Dundas moved resolutions respecting the revenues of India; these were carried without a division.

On the 30th of May his majesty prorogued parliament with a speech, expressing his entire approbation of the zeal and assiduity with which the houses applied themselves to the important objects recommended to their attention at the commencement of the session, and returning his majesty's particular thanks for the proofs which they had given of affection for his person, family, and government. Satisfied as he was with the assurances which he received of the continuance, among foreign powers, of general tranquillity, he greatly regretted the internal dissensions among the states of the united provinces. He rejoiced at the progress made in the reduction of the national debt; and at the measures adopted by Parliament for carrying into effect

Promising
aspect of af-
fairs.

effect the commercial treaty with France, and for simplifying the revenue ; he trusted the same patriotic dispositions would be exerted in their several counties, in promoting industry and good order ; the surest sources of private and public prosperity.

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Affairs of Holland.—Ruinous effects of the war with Britain.—Complaints against the Stadtholder.—Charge concerning the inaction of the fleets.—Objects of the aristocratic party at the end of the war.—They put arms into the hands of the multitude.—Effects of this measure.—Beginning of a democratic party.—Both the aristocratic and democratic parties agree in hostility to the house of Orange.—Advantages which they possessed over the Stadtholderian party.—They are supported by the monied men—and sectaries.—Circumstances favourable to the prince.—He is commander of the army and fleet.—Civil power and authority.—He is governor-general of the East and West India companies.—His hereditary possessions.—Several provinces favourable to his cause.—Friendship and affinity with Prussia.—Adverse faction trusts to the protection of France.—They deprive the prince of the command of the Hague.—The Orange family leave the Hague.—Temperate remonstrances of Prussia.—disregarded by the faction,—who absolve the troops from their oath of fidelity.—Meeting of the States of Holland and West Friesland,—violence of.—Remonstrance of the prince.—Frederic William sends his prime minister as ambassador to the States of Holland.—Firm memorial of.—Conduct of France.—encourages the faction.—Rebellion commences at Hattem.—The insurgents are defeated.—Conciliatory interposition of Prussia—and of Britain.—unavailing.—Joint mediation of Prussia and France.—Different views of these powers.—Alarming power of the democratic party—is exerted in levelling innovation—defeated in an attempt to suspend the office of Stadtholder.—They try a new fabrication of votes.—The armed burghers are employed as instruments of revolution.—Fury of a revolutionary mob.—The States General avow themselves supporters

porters of the constitution.—Disorders at Amsterdam.—The army continues attached to the prince.—The faction becomes desperate.—Arrest of the princess on her way to the Hague.—She is compelled to return.—On this insult the king of Prussia changes his tone.—He demands satisfaction of the States of Holland—which is not granted.—He determines on force.—The revolutionists rely on France.—The duke of Brunswick enters the United Provinces at the head of an army.—The revolutionists apply to France for aid.—Conduct of Britain.—The king of France intimates an intention of assisting the States of Holland.—Our king declares he will forcibly oppose such interference,—and prepares an armament.—France relinquishes her design,—and the duke of Brunswick is completely victorious.—Restoration of the Stadtholder.—Great and unanimous praises of the British cabinet.

THE most important events of the summer regarded the United Provinces. Their unfortunate war with Britain, and its ruinous consequences, had shaken the republic to its foundation, occasioned a departure from many of its ancient maxims and principles; and not only strengthened the old party which was friendly to France, but made way for the rise of a new faction, much more dangerous and destructive. The known averseness of the stadtholder to connection with the house of Bourbon and the American colonies, his near relation and believed attachment to the British sovereign, afforded grounds for suspicion, that he could not engage very heartily in a cause so directly opposite to opinions in which he had been nurtured. The disgraceful and ruinous consequences of the war, the immense losses sustained by the capture of St. Eustatius, with other severe blows, as well on the
seas

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Holland.

Ruinous
effects of
the war
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tain.

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Complaints
against the
stadtholder.

Charge con-
cerning the
inaction of
the fleet.

seas as in both the Indies, which the republic had received during that ill fought and unfortunate conflict, not only disappointed the views of the supporters of the French interest, but produced great discontent among many other individuals, who did not originally belong to that party; and they imputed to the backwardness of the stadtholder, losses which proceeded from their own folly in courting a war with England. They commenced hostilities unwisely and unjustly, when they had so much valuable merchandize, either on sea or in their factories, exposed to an enemy, who, notwithstanding every opposition, still retained the command of the ocean; and were enraged that the stadtholder did not perform impossibilities, by saving them from the consequences of their iniquitous impolicy. The charges against the stadtholder were chiefly general: it was said, that he had not exerted the force with which he was entrusted by the state, in that manner, or with that energy which he might have employed, and which would have been most effectual for counteracting the designs and frustrating the efforts of the enemy. On these points, the prince in vain repeatedly challenged his adversaries to the inquiry and proof; but, aware of the futility of their charges, they did not wish for investigation. One specific object of examination was, why the Dutch fleet did not proceed to Brest, according to compact, in the year 1782, that the whole combined naval force of the house of Bourbon and Holland might have descended at once on the coasts of Britain. The failure had been loudly attributed to criminal neglect, if not treachery; and a committee was

was speedily appointed to inquire into the causes : the result was, no discovery was made, tending in the smallest degree to affect the stadtholder.

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At the termination of the American war, no ideas of democratic liberty, or of the admission of the whole people into a share of the government, appear to have been entertained by the party in opposition to the stadtholder : their design was to strengthen the aristocracies, and to place the government in the hands of an oligarchy, composed of their own principal leaders, who would likewise be self-elected and perpetual ; and who, not subject to the jealousy attendant on the sway of a single person, in the nature of things would soon assume a decisive authority, which had never been possessed by the stadtholderate. The contest with the emperor afforded a pretext for a measure, which the aristocratic faction intended for strengthening their power, but eventually produced the total dissolution of their authority ; this was, the bestowal of arms on the multitude : the people finding arms in their hands, began at once to feel their own importance ; they awakened, as it were, from a dead sleep, and wondered why they held no share in that government which they were called upon to defend or support, and which it was evident without them could have no permanent security. The examples of Ireland and America were fresh before them ; the very term of volunteers, which they assumed, contributed to stamp the character of the part they were to act. The democratic spirit being thus suddenly brought to life, felt the possession of its faculties, and displayed all the vigour, and, perhaps,

Objects of
the aristo-
cratic party
at the end
of the war.

They put
arms into
the hands
of the mul-
titude.

Effects of
this mea-
sure.

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Beginning
of a demo-
cratic party.Both the
aristocratic
and demo-
cratic par-
ties agree in
hostility to
the house of
Orange.

haps, even the wantonness of youth. The armed burghers had been designed as a counterpoize to the army, which was known to be generally attached to the stadtholder; and it was fondly expected, that when they had performed the service, they would have silently sunk into their former insignificance; but, without waiting for that issue, they began to account themselves constituent members of the commonwealth, and demanded to be admitted to a share in the legislation and government of their respective cities, by electing delegates, who were to be received as their legal representatives in the public assemblies, and thus form a popular counterpoize to the aristocratic power. When these sentiments were avowed, nothing could exceed the surprise and consternation which they excited. The principal leaders of the faction were disconcerted and alarmed; they had improvidently raised a dangerous spirit, and brought a new power into action, without a due consideration of the force and eccentricity of its movements; and these were evidently beyond their control or management. This new body they saw would prove equally inimical to the aristocratical, as to the stadtholderian authority; but afraid, if they should then oppose the pretensions of the democratical party, that a powerful body would go over to the Orange adherents, and both united put an end to the sway of the nobles, they temporised, and appeared to coincide with the plebeian combination.

This union of two parties, of adverse interests, but concurring in desire to humiliate the stadtholder, was very formidable to that prince and

his friends. The States of Holland and West Friezeland were the great and constant impugners of the stadtholder's authority and prerogatives. They assumed a superiority which was not admitted by the constitution of the union, and was derived only from the circumstance of Holland possessing a greater share of wealth, and a larger extent of territory, than any of the others. The most bitter animosity which appeared against the prince, seemed to be peculiarly lodged in that province; and the city of Amsterdam took the lead of all other places in the invariable display of enmity. The adverse faction had many and great advantages over the Orange party in this contest: for several years they pursued one common object, to which all their measures were directed; thence they were closely united: while their antagonists having no purpose to attain, which might serve to combine their zeal or excite their enterprize, were loose, careless, and unconnected. The opposite party had likewise the important advantage of being favoured by the monied men; they were, besides, quickened by the ardour, and kept in constant exercise by the indefatigable zeal and restless spirit*, which is always observable in sectaries; and though the measure of arming the volunteers had been productive of much trouble and disorder among themselves, yet it afforded them at least the benefit of a formidable appearance.

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Advantages
which they
possessed
over the
stadtholde-
rian party.

They are
supported
by the mo-
nied men
and secta-
ries.

To balance these unfavourable circumstances, the prince was not without considerable means, both internal and external: as captain-general and

Circum-
stances fa-
vourable to
the prince.

* Annual Register, 1786.

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He is com-
mander of
the army
and fleet.

His civil
power and
authority.

admiral-general of the United Provinces, he had command of the whole military and naval force of the republic: he had the nomination of all the commissioned officers in either service, and was considered by these as their patron and master; he had also the appointment of most of the civil servants of the state. The landed interest, though a much less proportion of the aristocracy of Holland to the monied, than the corresponding class of England, was, with few exceptions, friendly to the prince in all the provinces; even of the people, great numbers (though not amounting to a majority) were partizans of the stadtholder. But his authority and legal powers were by no means confined to the fleet and army: by his office he was placed as president at the head of most, if not all of the civil departments of the republic. He presided, either in person or by deputy, as he chose, in all the assemblies of the several respective provinces. He had a seat, though not a vote, in the assembly of the states-general; and it was not merely a matter of right, but a part of his official duty, to be present at their deliberations, and to give his opinion or advice upon all matters of discussion, in which he deemed it necessary; and this had not only a great influence upon their proceedings, but in times of harmony, and under a vigorous and successful administration of public affairs, was generally decisive of their conduct. His right of nomination or rejection, with respect to the new members appointed to fill up the town senates and magistracies, was now contested, and generally overruled, but could not fail to have given him by its past operation a great influence in those distinct republics. In the
quality

quality of governor-general and supreme director of the East and West India companies, the stadtholder, likewise, had an unbounded influence in those great commercial bodies*. The prince, moreover, inherited very large estates and possessions, which included palaces, cities, and castles, and endowed him with several important privileges, independent of his offices under the state. Powerful as the aristocracy was, yet the party favourable to the stadtholder had many votaries: even in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and the greater cities of Holland, which were peculiarly hostile to the house of Orange, the domineering faction had to combat numerous adversaries. In the smaller towns the parties approached more nearly to an equality: of the provincial states, Guelderland and Utrecht were devoted to William: Overijssel, Groningen, and Zealand were fluctuating, and disposed to be mediatorial; so that Holland and West Friesland only were absolutely hostile to the stadtholder. The prince possessed an external resource and support in the friendship and protection of the illustrious Frederic: policy directed a wise king of Prussia to repress the ambition of France, and prevent her from acquiring, under the name of alliance, the command of those provinces, and bound him to the antigallican party; while affinity cemented the bands by which he was connected with the house of Orange. The authority of so renowned a protector, long shielded William and his consort from any measures of extreme violence. Such was the

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He is governor-general of the East and West India companies. His hereditary possessions.

Several provinces favourable to his cause.

Friendship and affinity with Prussia.

* See Annual Register for 1786, p. 74.

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1787.
Adverse
faction
trusts to the
protection
of France.

They de-
prive the
prince of
the com-
mand of the
Hague.

state of affairs in the beginning of autumn 1785. The aristocratic faction now found themselves very potent at home, and placed unbounded confidence in the assisting power of France. Proud of this protection, and freed of every apprehension from the emperor, they became less attentive to the admonitions of Frederic himself: they proceeded at once to shew that they were no longer disposed to observe any measures of amity with the prince stadtholder, nor even to preserve those outward appearances which might indicate a disposition to future conciliation. This was announced by divesting him of the government and command of the garrison of the Hague; a measure not more violent in the act, than it was degrading in the execution, through the unusual circumstances with which it was accompanied. The committee of the states issued a decree, by which they deprived the prince of his government and command, forbidding the troops to receive the word from him, to obey his orders in any manner, or even to pay him any of the customary military honours. To render the degradation complete, and as it were to add the incurable sting of a personal insult, they, at the same time, stripped him of his own body-guards, and even the hundred Swiss, who were destined merely to civil purposes, and to the support of state parade and magnificence. A remonstrance of the prince termed this decree a violent breach of the constitution, an invasion of his rights, and an indignity to his person and character; but his complaints produced no other satisfaction than the contemptuous intimation, that the guards were maintained for the purpose of supporting

porting the grandeur of the state, and not for the pageantry of the stadtholder. After such an open indignity, the prince and princess could no longer continue in a city, which was the seat of the court, public business, and government; as well as the residence of all foreign ministers: they therefore immediately abandoned the Hague. The prince retired to his own city of Breda, and the princess with the children repaired to West Friesland, where, notwithstanding the implacable enmity of the states of that province, the people were generally well affected to the Orange family. The faction followed their late measure by an order for furnishing the guards with new colours, in which the arms of the house of Orange were totally omitted, and those of the province of Holland substituted in their place. The king of Prussia regarded this personal insult, and violent attack upon the authority of the Stadtholder, with great but regulated indignation; he still preserved the most temperate language in his remonstrances; and while his expostulations placed in the fullest light the wrongs and undeserved injuries sustained by that prince, and sufficiently indicated that he was too much interested in his cause to permit him to become ultimately a victim to oppression; yet, for the present, he appeared rather in the character of a friendly neighbour to both, and an amicable mediator, wishing to reconcile the differences and misunderstandings between the parties, than the direct advocate of either*: but the faction was too far

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The Orange
family leave
the Hague.Temperate
remon-
strances of
Prussia.

* Annual Register for 1786, p. 77.

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disregarded
by the fac-
tion;who ab-
solve the
troops from
their oath of
fidelity.

advanced in violence to regard moderate remon-
strances; and proceeded to still greater innova-
tions. They issued an order, that the military ho-
nours usually bestowed on the stadtholder, in all his
different capacities of captain-general, governor of
the Hague, and commander of the garrison, should
in future be paid only to the president of their com-
mittee, as the representative of the states, and to the
grand pensionary of Holland. This was soon fol-
lowed by an order to discharge all the troops
of the province from their oath of fidelity to the
stadtholder, and to prescribe a new oath, by
which they were bound to the states only. The
faction took the press entirely into their own hands,
and the most scurrilous invectives were every day
published against the stadtholder; and not only
passed with impunity, but received high applause;
while the most temperate writings in defence of
his rights, or a bare statement of their nature, sub-
jected the publishers and writers to severe and cer-
tain punishment. Such was the state of affairs at
the end of the year 1785.

The prince stadtholder, from Breda had repaired
to Middleburgh; but finding the faction in Hol-
land had proceeded to extremities, he concluded
force would be necessary, resolved to betake himself
to the province in and near which his strength
chiefly lay; and, therefore, fixed his residence in
Guelderland: besides vicinity to his partizans, he
there could easily avail himself of the co-operation
of Prussia. The faction were not at first sensible of
the advantages which must accrue to the prince
from the residence which he had chosen, and pro-
ceeded

ceeded in their violence. Great expectations had been formed on both sides, from the assemblage of the states of Holland and West Friezeland, which was to take place at the Hague in the middle of March. When this body was convened, instead of the cool impartiality of a deliberative meeting, it exhibited all the violence and outrage of a mob; and the members appeared to have parted with the phlegm of Dutchmen, and to have borrowed the animated virulence of enraged Frenchmen. In the course of the session, the most important question which was handled by the assembly, was, whether the stadtholder should be restored to the government of the Hague? and after many vehement debates it was, on the 27th of July, carried against the prince of Orange, by a majority of only one; the numbers being ten to nine. The equestrian order, and the deputies of some towns, protested against this resolution as violent, illegal, and unconstitutional. William did not fail to express the strongest reprobation of this conduct of the states: in a letter to that body he denied the legality of one or two provinces presuming to deprive him of a power which had been conferred by the whole confederacy; he did not even acknowledge the right of the whole union to dispossess him of the dignities and powers, which were in the fullest manner rendered hereditary in his family; but without, for the present, investigating that question, he argued, that at least the retraction of the authority should be attended with the same unanimity which prevailed in the donation. The states of Holland, regarding this letter as a defiance, passed a second

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Meeting of
the states
of Holland
and West
Friezeland;

violence of.

Remon-
strance of
the prince.

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Frederic
William
sends his
prime mi-
nister am-
bassador to
the states of
Holland.

Firm me-
morial of.

decree confirming the first. The death of Frederic brought to the throne of Prussia the brother of the princess of Orange, and produced a more active interference to support the interests of the sister, than had been employed while she was only the niece. Soon after his accession, Frederic William sent his prime minister, the count de Goertz, as ambassador extraordinary to the states of Holland; and by him a long letter * to the states-general. This paper mingled temperance of manner with vigour of substance, and was in every respect worthy of ministers formed under the wise and resolute Frederic. Its introduction removed the objections which might be made by the states to the interference of a foreign power in their internal affairs. The firm friendship, which for two centuries had subsisted between his predecessors and the republic, would even have demanded his friendly and mediatorial interposition in the present unhappy and dangerous state of their civil dissensions: his situation, as their nearest neighbour, and the vicinity of a part of his dominions to their territories, must necessarily prevent him from being indifferent to any violent or essential change that was attempted to be made in the constitution of the republic: besides these causes, the near relation in which he stood with the prince stadtholder, and the affection which he bore to the princess his sister, rendered it impossible that he could be unconcerned in seeing them degraded from their high rank and authority, and the stadtholder arbitrarily deprived of his rights and prero-

* See State Papers of 1786, Sept. 18.

gatives:

gatives: he, therefore, urgently pressed the states general to interpose their friendly and powerful mediation with the states of Holland and West Friezeland, that the differences between them and the statholder might be amicably settled, and the prince restored to his rights and dignities. The application expressed the fullest confidence that the states general would exert themselves for the attainment of its purposes; and prudently forbore any intimation of the measures which Prussia would pursue, should the letter not produce the intended effects. This representation made a very strong impression on the states of five of the provinces; Holland and West Friezeland vehemently protested against foreign interference; but while they reprobated the interposition of a potentate hostile to their faction, they closely connected themselves with a power that was friendly to the anti-stadtholderian party. The court of Versailles skilfully fanned the flame of discontent by subordinate agents, but her public memorials were couched in so equivocal terms, as to admit of different, and even contrary constructions; and carefully abstained from pledging France to any specific line of conduct. The faction, however, was well assured of the support of France; and by that expectation inflamed to the most insolent violence: they seemed indeed not only to cast off all obedience to their own laws, but every regard to the law of nations. A courier from Berlin to London was stopped, and narrowly escaped having his dispatches examined by the populace of Woerden. This outrage obliged the count de Goertz formally to demand a passport

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Conduct of
Franceencourages
the faction.

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Rebellion
commences
at Hattem.

passport from the states-general, for a courier he was sending with dispatches to his royal master. The states which were in the interest of the Orange family, strongly remonstrated against the turbulent outrages of Holland, but found their interference made no impression; the standard of rebellion at length was hoisted at Hattem and Elbourg: the states of Guelderland, at the frontiers of which these towns are situated, determined to employ force in repressing revolt: they charged the prince stadtholder, as captain-general, immediately to send a sufficient number of troops, under the conduct of an experienced officer, to these scenes of disturbance, with injunctions to continue there until further orders; but that if the inhabitants were to make any resistance to the performance of this service, such officer was authorized, in spite of all obstacles, to support the sovereign authority of their noble mightinesses, by proceeding to force and violence in the establishment of the garrisons. General Spengler, with four regiments, and proper artillery, was appointed by the stadtholder to this service, with strict injunctions, if possible, to avoid the shedding of blood. The armed burghers of Hattem, being reinforced by as many volunteers as money or party zeal could procure from different quarters, exhibited a great parade of making a most obstinate resistance. Their cannon were mounted on the walls and works; and on the approach of the stadtholder's little army, as they called the regular forces by way of contempt, they fired several rounds of artillery with great briskness, but with so defective judgment in the direction, as not

to

to produce the smallest effect. As soon as Spengler arrived within a proper distance, in order to do the least possible mischief, he pointed his artillery at the chimneys and tops of the houses only; this, however, along with the bold advance and near approach of the troops, soon produced the desired effect; the armed burghers, with their adherents and auxiliaries, abandoned the town; and Spengler's men entered at one gate, as they were retiring through another. Elbourg was relinquished in the same manner, and with still less trouble*. The faction commanded all the public papers, and represented the trifling affair at Hattem as a signal display of republican heroism, worthy of the descendants of those bands which had risen to vindicate their liberty from Alva and Philip; they could have completely routed the soldiers of Orange, but patriotic as well as valiant, they were willing to spare the effusion of the blood of their countrymen. In the same style of delusion, nothing could be more shocking or deplorable than the accounts which they published of the enormities, the plunder, and cruelties, committed by the troops who gained possession of Hattem and Elbourg. The capture of the two towns was represented by the faction as the actual commencement of civil war; and nothing was to be heard but execrations, as well against the states of Gueldres, as the prince stadtholder. In the province of Holland especially, the flames seemed to be blown up nearly to the greatest height at which they were capable of arriving. All

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The insur-
gents are
defeated.

* See Annual Register for 1786, p. 87.

regard

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Concilia-
tory inter-
position of
Prussiaand of Bri-
tain, una-
vailing.Joint me-
diation of
Prussia and
France.

regard to forms was now laid aside in completing the deposition by force, of those magistrates, senators, and members of the respective town councils, who were known or suspected to be of the opposite party. Towards the close of 1786, the fortune of the house of Orange appeared to be entirely fallen; but external efforts were made in its favour, which proved ultimately successful. The king of Prussia was incessant in his endeavours to promote all such measures of conciliation, as could in any degree tend to prevent those unpleasant and dangerous consequences, which the present state of things, and the violence of the republican party, could not otherwise fail to produce. For the attainment of this purpose he shewed himself disposed to try any means, however unpromising, and to coincide with any interests, however discordant, that afforded even a possibility of success.

The court of London offered its joint mediation with Berlin; but the faction, aware of the predilection of Britain for the interest of the stadtholder, as well as the family of Orange, totally refused her mediation. The king of Prussia therefore proposed that France, the avowed friend and close ally of the republic, should, along with himself, undertake the kind office, but arduous task, of settling and composing the differences by which it was distracted. The court of France professed to receive these overtures with the warmest cordiality; and an ambassador was sent to the Hague for the purpose desired. Though such movements wore the appearance of returning tranquillity, yet it was easily seen that the actual conciliation of the contending parties

parties was very improbable. France, it was conceived, would never really coincide with the king of Prussia in restoring the stadtholder to his power, which the faction regarded with bitter hatred; the king of Prussia would not sacrifice to France the interests of the prince of Orange, by making such concessions as the adverse combination would require. The ministers, however, of France and Prussia entered upon the negotiation, which was carried on during the winter months; and though the mediators had agreed in their views and intentions, the objects and notions of the parties concerned were so diametrically opposite, that it would be totally impossible to satisfy both. While contests, begun by an aristocratic faction, were thus distracting the United Provinces, the democratical party, which, as we have seen, the dissensions generated, was becoming extremely powerful. In Utrecht a government entirely democratical was established; and in Holland the states found, that in stimulating the efforts of the populace, they had called in an auxiliary more formidable than the adversary whom they desired to subdue: the violence and anarchy of mob government now prevailed throughout the provinces. It sometimes fortunately happens, that the desultory efforts of a domineering populace, from unskilful direction, produce effects diametrically opposite to the intentions. The city of Amsterdam from the beginning had been the bitterest and most implacable of the stadtholder's enemies; so that it seemed as if all the violent measures pursued against him, had originated in the pride, malice, and power of those citizens: but Amsterdam suddenly

C H A P.
XXXVIII.1787.
Different
views of
those
powers.Alarming
power of the
democratic
party;is exerted
in levelling
innovation;

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1787.

defeated in
an attempt
to suspend
the office of
stadtholder.

They try a
new fabrica-
tion of
votes.

suddenly changed sides, and declared in favour of the stadtholder. To detail the causes of this revolution, belongs not to a history which considers the affairs of the United Provinces, only as they affected the interests, or came to stimulate the energies of Britain; and it may suffice to say, that the change produced great alarm in the anti-stadtholderian faction, and eventually facilitated the re-establishment of the house of Orange. The defection of Amsterdam could not but excite an universal alarm among the leaders of the revolutionary party, and urged them to the adoption of every measure that could possibly tend to counteract its effect: for this purpose they proceeded to very violent conduct; and at length resolved to propose a daring measure, which, though they had often meditated, they had not yet ventured to carry into execution: this was the suspension of the prince of Orange from his offices of stadtholder and admiral-general, in the same manner they had already succeeded in suspending him from his command of captain-general. This question was brought forward on the 10th of January 1787, and for two succeeding days occasioned the warmest and most violent debates that had ever been known in the assembly. The proposers, however, found the opposition so formidable, and the aspect of the independent members so doubtful, that they did not choose to hazard the decision of a vote on the question.

Defeated in this attempt, the faction attempted a new fabrication of votes; but the project was treated with indignant resentment and scorn. The states of Holland, deprived of the co-operation of Amsterdam,

dam, and thwarted in schemes of violence, began in spring 1787 to assume a moderate tone, and to adopt measures very disagreeable to the violent leaders of the adverse faction: the cause of the stadtholder became popular, even in the province of Holland. The aristocratic confederates hitherto, as much as possible, repressed the ambition of the democratical malcontents; but now they saw that there was no alternative but acquiescence in their claim, or submission to the stadtholder: on the former they resolved, and called in the armed burghers as their instruments in revolutionizing the state. Such reformers proceeded with the usual fury of a democratic mob. They attacked the assemblies of Rotterdam and other towns, and to produce unanimity drove away by force every member whom they knew or suspected to be friendly to the house of Orange, or enemies to boundless innovation. Encouraged by their success, they carried their reforming projects to Amsterdam; and effected a similar change in the metropolis. During antecedent disorders, the states-general had observed strict impartiality; and it could not be discovered to which side they inclined; but now that an armed mob threatened confusion and anarchy, they thought it was full time to rally round the constituted authorities, in whose downfall their own ruin must be involved.

In May 1787, they avowed themselves the defenders of the existing establishments; and now it was no longer a contest between the house of Orange and a party of nobles, but between constitutional order and revolutionary rebellion. The armed

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

The armed burghers are employed as instruments of revolution.

Fury of a revolutionary mob.

The states-general avow themselves supporters of the constitution.

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

Disorders at
Amsterdam.The army
continues
attached to
the prince.

armed populace having forcibly restored the majority of malcontents in the states of Holland, that body assumed to itself powers that could only belong to the states-general. Among the respective partizans frequent skirmishes took place, not without bloodshed. The revolutionary democrats did not confine themselves to personal outrage and savage cruelty, but added robbery: the richest towns of that very opulent country became scenes of pillage*. In the course of the summer, Amsterdam was a scene of more dreadful devastation, than any European metropolis had exhibited during the preceding part of the eighteenth century; it indeed afforded a specimen to the world of the consequences of a furious love of change, which entirely overleaped every bound of reason and of justice. The states of Holland were extremely anxious to obtain a command of the troops; and the states-general with equal activity, and much greater effect, counteracted these efforts: this, indeed, was the less difficult, as the disposition of the army continued very favourable to the family of Orange; many, both of officers and privates, refused to obey the orders of the provincial states, and ardently desired the restitution of the stadtholder. The states-general very properly encouraged this repugnance to usurped authority, and took the troops into immediate protection and pay. Colonel Balneavis, a Scottish gentleman of great ability and resolution, by his successful address was the means of recalling the military force of Holland to the service of their

* Annual Register 1787, chap. i.

prince.

prince. Possessing the affection and confidence of the soldiers, he carried with him two battalions to join the stadtholder, and the other regiments immediately followed so laudable an example. But the departure of their troops, instead of intimidating the states of Holland, served only to drive them to more desperate violence.

C H A P.
XXXVII.

1787.

The faction
becomes
desperate.

Amidst all the rage which the revolutionists vented against the government of the house of Orange, the persons of these princes had not hitherto been violated; but the infatuated fury of a mob no longer confined itself within these bounds. The consort of the stadtholder was a princess of vigorous capacity, and intrepid spirit: from the justice of the cause, as well as the late accessions to the party, she conceived that the hour of restoration was approaching, and might be accelerated by a bold and resolute effort. She accordingly determined to leave Nimeguen, unaccompanied by her husband; to proceed to the Hague and shew herself to the people; she hoped, through the states-general, and other adherents, corporate and private, to effect the restoration of the prince. Accompanied only by the baroness Wassenaar, count Bentick, and a field-officer or two, and attended by a few domestics, the princess arrived at the borders of Holland, near Schoonhoven. Since the departure of the constitutional troops, the revolutionary burghers composed the sole military force of Holland: a party of these surrounded the carriage, and arrested the person of the princess. The commander of this notable troop was altogether worthy

Arrest of
the princess
on her way
to the
Hague.

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

of such a corps; a vulgar and ignorant * burgher; and, by unmerited authority elated to insolence, this person and his band behaved with brutal irreverence; they conducted the illustrious captive as a spectacle, with all the coarse vociferation of an exulting rabble: even when their barbarous dissonance startled the horses, and almost overturned her carriage in a canal, they would not permit the gentlemen of the suite to afford her assistance. At length they arrived at an inn; the gallant captain accompanied the princess to her room: regardless of the presence of a lady, this municipal commander kept his sword drawn; but, her attendants representing the impropriety of such an exhibition, he complaisantly returned it to the scabbard: after this effort of politeness, he sat down by her side, crossed-legged, and at the same time ordering beer, pipes and tobacco, enjoyed a comfortable regale, but without being seduced by such appropriate pleasure to intermit the vigilance † of official employment.

She is compelled to return.

After being confined several hours, commissioners arrived from the town of Woerden, who expressly told the princess she would not be allowed to continue the journey, but she might retire wherever she chose; accordingly she set out on her return to Nimeguen: the prince, informed of her

* See Annual Register for 1787, p. 32.

† The Annual Register mentions some very laughable instances of the assiduity with which the Dutch sentinels kept watch, to prevent female attendants from effecting their escape: see A. R. p. 33.

capture,

capture, applied to the states-general for protection to his consort, and satisfaction for so gross and outrageous an insult; and his representation was seconded by a much more powerful applicant: the conduct of the revolutionists towards the princesses, was attended with very important consequences. Hitherto the king of Prussia had acted towards the United Provinces as a mediating neighbour between the two parties: though naturally, and indeed avowedly, favourable to one, he had never intimated a design of forcible interference; but from the seizure of the princesses, his relation to the provinces was changed: he was now a powerful brother demanding reparation to a sister; a mighty monarch requiring the satisfaction which he could exact. He sent a memorial to the states of Holland, wherein he insisted upon immediate and ample atonement, and also the punishment of the perpetrators: he, moreover, added, that he should estimate the value which they attached to his friendship, by their compliance with this requisition *. Before this memorial arrived, the states of Holland had expressed their approbation of the conduct of the persons who had seized the princesses: they returned a long and laboured answer; but acknowledged no blame, and proffered no satisfaction. The stubborn injustice of the states of Holland was contrasted by the fair and liberal conduct of the states-general, to whom the king of Prussia had also applied: that assembly declared,

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

On this insult the king of Prussia changes his tone.

He demands satisfaction of the states of Holland;

which is not granted.

* See State Papers, August 6, 1787.

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

He deter-
mines on
force.The revolu-
tionists rely
on France.

that they had made repeated representations to the provincial meeting of Holland on this outrageous insult; that those states themselves must be entirely responsible for measures, in regretting and reprobating which, their high mightinesses perfectly agreed with his Prussian majesty. Frederic was determined to enforce from the states of Holland the satisfaction which they had refused to his requisition: meanwhile he repeated his demand in indignant and peremptory terms, and made a representation of their proceedings to the court of France, to which the faction chiefly trusted. His christian majesty expressed to the states very strong disapprobation of the treatment which the princess had experienced; and declared he thought the king of Prussia very fully justified in demanding ample satisfaction. Notwithstanding this intimation, the revolutionary party persisted in their course; they had no doubt that, if affairs came to an open rupture, they would receive from France an assistance proportioned to the danger by which they might be threatened: the Prussian army they knew was strong, but the French army they naturally conceived to be much stronger; and they were too deeply engrossed themselves to consider or estimate internal circumstances in the dominions of their ally, which might prevent the employment of his usual force.

Repeated remonstrances and replications passed between the states of Holland and the Prussian king during the month of August; but so little to the satisfaction of Frederic William, that he made
immediate

immediate and powerful preparations for hostilities ; and in the beginning of September, an army commanded by the duke of Brunswic was ready to enter the Low Countries. Having in the seven years war * ascertained a very high character for heroism and ability, while hereditary prince, from the peace this commander had passed his time in tranquillity, but not idleness, devoting his attention to military and political improvement. On the death of his father, becoming reigning duke, he continued such pursuits as meliorated the condition of his territories. From these meritorious occupations he was now called to head an armament, destined to enforce the purposes of justice. On the 13th of September he entered the province of Guelderland, and there the country being all favourable to his attempts, he, without opposition, reached the confines of Holland. On the duke of Brunswic's approach, the revolutionary party applied to France for aid, and obtained a promise of support.

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

The duke of Brunswic enters the United Provinces at the head of an army. The revolutionists apply to France for aid.

Britain regarded with anxious attention the important events that passed in the United Provinces, and perceived that the crisis was arrived, when it must be speedily determined, whether the Dutch republic was to resume her ancient and natural connection with her first protector, or to become a mere appendage of France. Our sovereign, during the course of the disputes, repeatedly offered his

Conduct of Britain.

* See our narrative of the campaigns of the allies in Germany, in the first chapters of this history, *passim*.

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

The king of France intimates an intention of assisting the states of Holland.

Our king declares he will forcibly oppose such interference; and prepares an armament.

France thereupon relinquishes her design;

friendly mediation; but his interposition was extremely disagreeable to the revolutionary faction, which could not stand the award of an impartial umpire. The court of London was confident that the internal strength of the constitutional party, seconded by the king of Prussia, was perfectly adequate to the adjustment of disputes, and the resumption of constitutional rights, if France did not interfere with an armed force. Dignity, justice, and policy, called from his majesty explicit avowals *, that he would not remain a quiet spectator of such forcible interference. In these circumstances, the chief object of British policy, concerning Holland, was to watch the movements of the court of Versailles. A message from his christian majesty announced to our king, that he had determined to afford to the states of Holland the assistance which they had requested. Such an intimation demanded only one line of conduct; our king accordingly declared to France, that if she interposed forcibly, Britain should take an active part; and he gave immediate directions for augmenting his fleet and army. A powerful armament was equipped with uncommon expedition: a decisive and grand tone, worthy of mighty power supporting conscious justice, produced the desired effect; and France made no hostile effort to support the revolutionary faction. The energetic vigour of the British cabinet being so successfully exerted towards the formi-

* See his majesty's speech, November 27, 1787. State Papers.

dable ally of the states of Holland, the duke of Brunswic proceeded in a rapid career of victory. The hidden friends of the house of Orange now publicly declared themselves: the revolutionists, however, still entertaining hopes France would not yield, threw themselves into Amsterdam, and resolved to stand a siege; but finding their expectations entirely vanished, they at length entered into a capitulation; the constitutional party proved completely triumphant, and the stadtholder was restored to all his rights and dignities. The discussion which arose between Britain and France terminated amicably, after his christian majesty had declared, that in intimating a design of active interposition in the affairs of Holland, he had never intended forcible efforts*. Such was the result of the disputes in the United Provinces, and the measures which Britain adopted respecting the contests. This was the first occasion that displayed the genius and energy of Pitt in foreign policy, and procured him general admiration abroad and at home. Opposition as warmly and loudly praised his conduct, as the rest of the nation: indeed it is difficult to conceive that two opinions could be formed on the subject by any Briton who at once valued and understood the interests of his country. The interference was requisite, to prevent such an aggrandizement of France, as must

C H A P.
XXXVIII.1787.
and the
duke of
Brunswic
is com-
pletely vic-
torious.Restoration
of the stadtholder.Great and
unanimous
praises of
the British
cabinet.

* See correspondence between the respective ministers of Britain and France on this subject, in the State Papers of October 1787.

C H A P.
XXXVIII.

1787.

endanger this country. The means were vigour of tone, seconded by powerful preparation, the most successful instruments which a mighty nation can employ for averting aggression, either direct or circuitous.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Meeting of parliament.—Unanimous approbation of the conduct of ministry respecting Holland.—Bishop of Landaff's speech on British interference in continental affairs.—Subsidiary treaty with the landgrave of Hesse Cassel.—Plan for the defence of the West Indies.—Complaints of a partial promotion of flag officers.—Ministers contend that the complaint is unfounded.—Declaratory law for explaining certain parts of Mr. Pitt's East India bill.—Origin of the doubts from which this measure proceeded.—Regiments ordered by government to India, to be paid and subsisted at the expence of the company.—Question by Mr. Pitt's bill; had government that power? denied by the directors and by opposition in parliament.—Arguments for and against.—Passed into a law.—Extension of the mutiny bill.—Bill against the smuggled exportation of wool—passed into a law.—Commencement of an inquiry concerning negro slavery.—State of facts.—General and special objections to negro slavery.—Impugned as contrary to christianity, as well as justice and humanity.—Pious and benevolent enthusiasm in favour of the negroes.—Mr. Wilberforce—character, talents, and laudable zeal—opposite arguments.—Slavery an evil great or small, according to the sentiments and circumstances of the sufferers.—The condition of the African negroes is meliorated by becoming slaves to British masters.—Slaves in our plantations generally happy.—If Britain abolish slavery, other European states will enjoy the benefits.—Great capitals are embarked on the public faith guaranteeing this trade.—An ample source of private opulence, and public revenue.—Petitions for and against the abolition of the slave-trade.—The privy council institutes an inquiry into the details and alleged cruelties of the slave-trade.—Sir William Dolben's motion for regulating the transportation of negroes.—

negroes—passed into a law.—Mr. Pitt's bill for the relief and recompence of the American loyalists.—Commencement of Hastings's trial.—Speech of Mr. Burke.—Motion for the impeachment of sir Elijah Impey—negatived.—Mr. Grenville's bill for improving his father's law respecting contested elections.—Supplies.—Flourishing state of commerce and finance.

CHAP.
XXXIX.

1787.
Meeting of
Parliament.

PARLIAMENT assembled on the 27th of November; and his majesty's speech exhibited to the houses an outline of the policy which he had adopted concerning Holland. He had endeavoured by his good offices to restore tranquillity between the contending parties, but found his efforts unavailing: he also discovered a desire of forcible interference on the part of France; he expressed to his christian majesty his determination to counter-act any such intention, and had armed for that purpose; but the success of the Prussian troops had re-established the lawful government in Holland; an explanation had taken place between his majesty and the king of France, which had terminated amicably, and both parties had agreed to disarm. The necessary preparations had produced extraordinary expences, for which he doubted not his faithful commons would provide, and also adopt proper means for the defence of his distant dominions. He rejoiced at the flourishing state of commerce and the revenue, and the zeal and unanimity which his subjects demonstrated during the late expectation of war. From the dispositions which were then manifested, in any future emergency, he should depend on a promptness and vigour of
of

of exertion, proportionate to the exigence by which it might be required.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

The conduct of Mr. Pitt respecting Holland was extremely popular among all parties throughout the kingdom; and in both houses it experienced the same unanimous commendation. Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Sheridan, perfectly coincided with Mr. Pitt and his friends in the general principle of interference in continental affairs to preserve the balance of Europe. In the house of peers the bishop of Landaff, in justifying the principle, adduced reasoning at once appropriate to that specific case, and generalizing the constituents of wise and just interposition in any future circumstances. "Upon what ground (he said) did he approve of our late interference? on the ground of SELF-PRESERVATION. *If France had gained Holland, the security of Britain would have been endangered:* when it is said that Holland and the other states of Europe are independent states, the proposition is true only on a certain consideration, for they all depend one upon another, like the links of a chain; and it is the business of each to watch every other, lest any one become so weighty and powerful as to endanger the security or political importance of the rest."

1787.
Unanimous
approbation
of the con-
duct of mi-
nistry re-
specting
Holland.

Bishop of
Landaff's
view of Bri-
tish interfe-
rence in
continental
affairs.

During the preparations, a subsidiary treaty had been concluded with the landgrave of Hesse Cassel; by which that prince was to receive 36,093l. to hold twelve thousand troops ready to be employed by Britain when their services should be required. This treaty was part of a general system, which it was then deemed premature to detail: the motion
passed

Subsidiary
treaty with
the land-
grave of
Hesse Cassel.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1787.
Plan for the
defence of
the West
Indies.

passed without a division. On the 10th of December an augmentation of the army was proposed, for the purpose recommended by his majesty's speech, of strengthening our distant possessions. On particular inquiry into the state of defence of our western settlements, ministers had found the force to be inadequate; this opinion had been confirmed by the reports of the officers commanding in the West Indies, who had been severally consulted upon the troops which each thought requisite for the security of the island he commanded. It was objected by some members of opposition, that the opinions of our commanders abroad did not afford satisfactory grounds for increasing our present establishments. It was obvious, that each of these officers would demand as large a force as he thought adequate to the defence of his own particular situation, and would govern himself in such requisition, merely by a regard to his own responsibility; whereas, in judging of an adequate peace establishment for all the possessions of Britain, the whole would depend on a general view of its parts, and their relative exigencies; by the present motion the house was called on to vote an increase of the army without sufficient grounds. It was replied, that the opinion of the officers had not been asked on the whole force requisite for the defence of the West Indies, but that undoubtedly in forming plans concerning remote objects, men must proceed on information, and in seeking information must have recourse to those by whom it can be best afforded; officers who had been on the spot were certainly competent to state the separate facts, on the joint
result

result of which ministers formed their inferences. The West India islands were, without doubt, objects of the highest importance to Britain. For their secure defence, three modes might be mentioned: first, a great stationary fleet: secondly, succours might be sent on the prospect of a rupture; or thirdly, such a military force as would prevent a surprise. The experience of last war proved that a fleet could not solely defend these possessions; since some of the islands had been wrested from us, when our naval strength was equal to the strength of the enemy: respecting the second means, it might be unsafe to detach any part of our army or navy from Europe; and though there should be no danger in the attempt, the succours might not arrive in time to prevent mischief; therefore the most eligible mode was to have a sufficient military force upon the respective islands to secure them from surprise; since, from the dispersion and distance of the islands, and the peculiarities of that climate, winds, and currents, it would sometimes be absolutely impossible for a fleet to afford that speedy relief which the occasion might require.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1787.

After the recess, one of the first subjects of discussion before the commons was a recent promotion of flag-officers during the preparations for war. Sixteen captains had been promoted to the flag, and about forty passed over. This partial promotion had greatly displeased the officers whom it omitted. They brought forward their complaint in the house of peers, under the patronage of lord Rawdon, who moved for the presentment of an address

1788.
Complaint
of a partial
promotion
of flag-offi-
cers.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1788.

Ministers
contend that
the com-
plaint is un-
founded.

to the king ; praying, that he would be graciously pleased to take into his royal consideration the services of such captains of his majesty's navy, as were passed over in the last promotion. Lord Howe, first commissioner of the admiralty, endeavoured to justify the conduct of the board ; to execute beneficially the functions of their office, the lords of the admiralty must employ their own judgment and discretion in delegating an important trust : unless they were invested with the privilege of selection, they certainly could not undertake the burden of responsibility. His lordship could not state in a public assembly the particular grounds on which he had formed his judgment ; there might be several reasons for not promoting captains to be admirals, without impeaching the character of the officers in question. The same persons might be fit for a subordinate employment, without being qualified for a higher trust ; officers who had served ably and meritoriously all their lives, might not appear proper to be entrusted with the care of a fleet. So important a charge ought to be committed to men, not only of firm minds, but of such bodily strength as would enable them to endure the fatigues of the hard service which they might have to sustain. The executive government must have the choice of its own officers in the various degrees and kinds of service, otherwise it cannot be responsible for the effectual discharge of its duties. On these grounds the motion was rejected by the lords : in the commons a similar proposition was brought forward and supported by greater particularity of detail, in order to illustrate individual hardships ; but as the
general

general principle was the same, the proposed address was negatived, though by a small majority. It was afterwards moved, that the arbitrary powers which were claimed by the admiralty, having in some degree received the sanction of the house, to prevent the mischievous consequences which might ensue, they should adopt, as a rule of service, some permanent principle, to which officers might trust; and a motion was made, that it is highly injurious to the navy to set aside from promotion to flags, meritorious officers of approved service, who are not precluded by the orders of his majesty in council. Ministers objected to the proposition as unnecessary; and it was negatived.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1788.

The most important measure of this session, was a bill introduced by Mr. Pitt to explain doubts which had arisen concerning a part of the law of 1784, for the administration of British India. During the apprehensions of a rupture with France, government had formed a resolution of sending out four additional regiments to India, on board the company's ships, for the protection of our possessions in that quarter; and the proposition had been received with general approbation by the court of directors. Though apprehensions of war were dissipated, yet government was anxious for the security of distant possessions, and for that purpose proposed a permanent establishment of his majesty's troops in India; on these grounds they adhered to the determination of sending the soldiers. A question had arisen between the directors and the board of control, concerning the expence of their conveyance, their future pay and subsistence. By an act

Declaratory
bill for ex-
plaining Mr.
Pitt's East
India law.

Origin of
the doubts
from which
this measure
proceeded.

Regiments
ordered by
government
to India, to
be paid and
subsisted at
the expence
of the com-
pany.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1788.

which passed in the year 1781, it was stipulated, that the company should be bound to pay for such troops only, as were sent to India upon their requisition; and upon this act the directors had refused to charge the company with the expence of the forces now about to be sent. The board of control contended, that they were invested with a power of ordering the conveyance of such troops as circumstances might require; and that if the directors refused, the expence should be defrayed out of the revenues which arose from their territorial possessions. The court of directors took the advice of several eminent lawyers, who concurred in their opinion. Mr. Pitt, impressed with the contrary idea, proposed to bring in a bill for removing the doubts in question, by declaring the intention of the legislature in the act of 1784, to have been agreeable to the construction put upon it by administration. By the law of 1784 he contended, every power, which before that time was entrusted to the court of directors for administering the territorial possessions, was by that act vested in the board of control. Those commissioners had the sole direction of the military and political concerns, the collection and management of territorial revenue. His object had been to leave to the corporate proprietors, and their representatives, the direction of those commercial concerns for which their charter had been granted, but to take into the hands of the executive government territorial affairs; under the political department was evidently to be classed, the disposal of troops, and the provisions for their maintenance.

As

As doubts were entertained and sanctioned by legal authority highly respectable, he proposed an act declaring the meaning of the law. This motion was controverted, first, on general grounds : legislature ought never to have recourse to this expedient, except when either the wording of an act was evidently so ambiguous as to stand in need of explanation, or where, in consequence of the clashing judgment of courts, or doubts expressed by judges from the bench, it became necessary for the legislature to propound anew its own meaning. In all other cases, parliament by interfering would quit its legislative, and assume a judicial capacity ; and in the present instance would decide in a cause, in which it was in some respects interested as a party ; since it would gain by its own decision. It was a dispute between the crown or the public, and a corporation, on a pecuniary claim. The king insists upon a certain sum of money from the company, for a specified object. The company admit a sum to be due, but not the amount demanded : here is a clear and simple question, on which an issue might be tried in a court of law. The measure proposed was liable to many serious political objections, and might be used as a precedent for the worst purposes. A minister has nothing to do but to propose, and bring in a bill for granting new powers, in doubtful and ambiguous words, under restraints indistinctly defined, and with clauses that have a double aspect. The company had been induced to consent to the act of 1784, upon pretences, which now proved to be delusive ; and the minister, having obtained that consent, was resolved to put his own

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1788.
Question ;
Had govern-
ment by
Mr. Pitt's
law that
power ? de-
nied by the
directors and
opposition in
parliament.

C H A P.
XXXIX.

1788.

Arguments
against the
declaratory
bill.

construction upon it, contrary to the original intention of the party concerned. In the farther progress of the bill, counsel was heard for the India company at the bar of the house, and the whole ability of opposition was exerted to prevent its enactment.

The following was the substance of the arguments, legal and political, which were employed on each side. Its opponents controverted it principally upon two grounds: first, that the construction attempted to be put upon the act of 1784, was not its true and just construction: and secondly, that if it admitted such interpretation, the powers it vested in the board of control were injurious to the rights and interests of the company, and of a dangerous political nature, and therefore ought not to be confirmed. To prove the former proposition, its supporters contended that, the charter granted to the company having been purchased for a valuable consideration, every statute that diminished their rights ought to be construed, like penal laws, in the mildest sense, and so as to infringe those privileges in the least possible degree; and in ambiguous cases, acts of parliament should be explained in such a sense as to be consistent with each other. In the act of 1781 * it was expressly stipulated, that the company should defray the expence of no troops, but such as were sent to India upon their own requisition; therefore the acts of 1784 should be interpreted so as to coincide with the preceding law. But the best and safest mode of expounding

* See act of parliament 1781, respecting India.

a statute, was to illustrate one part of it by other clauses of the same act. By the law of 1784*, “the commissioners (it was admitted) are authorized and empowered from time to time, to superintend, direct, and control all acts, operations, and concerns, which in anywise relate to the civil or military government, or revenues of the territorial possessions of the company, in the manner in the said act directed:” and “the court of directors are required to pay obedience to, and to be governed and bound by, such orders and directions as the said court shall receive from the said board.” Were these clauses taken solely, it was allowed that they would justify the construction which was intended by the declaratory act; but from subsequent passages it was argued, that the positive directorial power of the commissioners was restrained to definite circumstances, and to be exercised on specified omissions of the East India directors. The directors by the act were required to deliver to the commissioners copies of all dispatches which were received from their servants in India, and all instructions proposed to be sent to the company’s officers in that country: these the commissioners, within fourteen days, were to return to the directors, either approved or disapproved and amended; and the directors were bound to obey the orders so amended or altered. If within fourteen days the court of directors should neglect to yield the obedience commanded by the act, then, and then only, the commissioners might originate instructions. If the Board were in-

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* See act for the government of India, July 1784.

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vested with the positive power claimed by the declaratory act, it was absurd to specify certain cases in which it might be lawful for them to send orders and instructions to the company's servants in India without the consent of the company. It was evident, from the whole tenor of the clauses taken together, that the authority vested in the commissioners was no other than a superintendency and control over the transactions of the company in their management of their affairs in India; a power to alter and amend their orders and instructions, and, in case of neglect in the directors, to carry such orders so amended into execution; but not to originate measures, in opposition to the chartered and stipulated right of the company. It was farther contended, that the directors had understood the power proposed to be conferred by Mr. Pitt's bill on the commissioners, to be subject to the alleged limitations; and that even the minister had expressly declared his coincidence in that construction; that otherwise the directors would have opposed it as no less hostile to the rights of the company, than the obnoxious bill of Mr. Fox *. The board of control itself had not understood the act of 1784 as investing them with the unlimited sway which they now claimed; they had acted upon the statute of 1781 for upwards of two years after the law of 1784, and by their conduct admitted that they had no power to send out any of his majesty's troops to India without the consent of the company. From the general rules of interpretation, from the clauses

* Speech of Mr. Fox on the second reading of the bill.

and

and tenor of the act in question, the opinions of those whom it first affected, the declaration of its framer, and the construction of the persons who were appointed to carry it into execution, members of opposition endeavoured to prove, that the power now proposed to be declared did not arise from it as a law*.

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They next objected to it as a measure of policy: the authority which was claimed annihilated the court of directors, and even the property of the company. The territorial revenues being in many instances unavoidably implicated in their commercial concerns, the absolute command of the former, as to their application and expenditure, would necessarily carry with it a control over the latter, and might be used to supersede the efficiency of the directors in the only branch of the company's affairs that was left to their management. The measure itself of sending four regiments to India was not less injurious to the rights and interests of the company, than the unlimited power under which it was to be executed. It would have been more economical and just, either to have suffered the company to raise four regiments, or to have sent over the 2,400 men which were wanting to complete the king's regiments already in India:—more economical, because in the one case the company's troops are, and would be maintained at infinitely less expence than the king's; in the other, the company would be free from the additional burthen of all the officers of the four new regiments:—more just, because in

* See parliamentary debates, March 1788, *passim*.

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the former case, the company would have enjoyed the patronage of the troops which they were to pay, and might provide for many of their own deserving officers, six hundred of whom, reduced at the late peace, were living in very distressed situations in India. It was farther impolitic, as it would create a jealousy and disgust among the officers in the company's service. The opponents next proceeded to the motives of ministers, which they alleged to be a desire of extending their own influence and patronage, at the expence of the India company. The ministers had formed a regular progressive plan, to grasp all the patronage of India. The direction claimed by the board of control afforded grounds of jealousy in another view; it placed a revenue at the disposal of the king's ministers, for raising and paying an army without consent of parliament, and was therefore inconsistent with the bill of rights, and a dangerous departure from the principles of the British constitution.

Arguments
for it.

By the supporters of the declaratory act, it was contended, first, respecting the rule of construction, that the principle could only be admitted, so far as was consistent with the spirit and express objects of the statute itself; it could be no reason for an interpretation of a subsequent law, that it militated against a prior; it would be absurd to put a sense upon an act, that would defeat the main ends for which it was passed; and with regard to the act of 1781, such parts of it as were inconsistent with the provisions of the subsequent arrangement, were virtually, though not expressly repealed. The object
of

of the plan of 1784 was, to take the entire management of territorial possessions, and the political government of India, out of the hands of the company, leaving them only the direction of their commercial concerns. The board of control was in future to be responsible to the public for the prosperity, defence, and security, of our Indian possessions, and was therefore to be invested with all the authorities necessary for the due discharge of the important trusts. These powers were given in general terms, and the mode of exercising them in particular cases was specified: in some they had a negative upon the orders of the directors; in others, where a difference of opinion arose, the board might enforce the execution of its own orders. The act in general clauses expressed this power which was claimed, and without it would have been totally inadequate to its object. Could it be supposed that parliament intended to leave to the company, who, it might be expected, from the short duration of their charter, would attend chiefly to their own immediate pecuniary interests, the entire disposition of their revenues, without enabling the board of control, who were responsible for the defence and security of the whole, to appropriate such part of them as should be thought necessary for those purposes? The assertion of opposition, that either Mr. Pitt or the board of control had understood the act in the sense imputed, was totally unfounded in truth, and unsupported by any evidence. With regard to the œconomy and policy of the measure, the company's troops might be raised and maintained at a smaller expence; but these were not

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sufficient for guarding India against dangers by which it was now threatened. As to the additional patronage said to accrue to the crown, it was denied: on the grand question of standing armies, there were inaccuracies in all the existing laws. The bill of rights was not very explicit; it hardly stated the illegality of a standing army within the kingdom, but was silent with respect to military force in our settlements abroad. Mr. Pitt declared, that if any danger was apprehended from the bill before the house, relative either to the augmentation of the army, or the patronage of India in general, he was ready to receive any modifications which might be offered to avert such danger. In the committee he proposed several clauses for so modifying the bill, as to remove the objections respecting patronage. The bill was carried in the house of commons by a majority of fifty-four; and, after experiencing strong opposition in the house of peers, was passed into a law; and thus it was declared that the commissioners, being instituted for the territorial administration of India by the act of 1784, possessed a directorial, as well as controlling power, in whatever was necessary to the effectual execution of the trust reposed in them by the act of 1784.

The bill is
passed into
a law.

Extension
of the mu-
tiny bill.

In the mutiny bill of this session, a clause was proposed for incorporating with the army a new body of military artificers. It was objected to this project, that it was an unnecessary extension of the military law, and consequently inconsistent with the principles of the constitution. These artificers had served the army, hitherto, without diminution of their liberty, and no necessity was shewn why their

tenure

tenure of service should be changed. The great advocate for the clause was the duke of Richmond *. Such a corps (he said) was employed in all the armies abroad, and found to be extremely useful: he had proposed such an establishment to his majesty, who was pleased to signify his approbation of the scheme. The policy of the nation had considered it as right that all soldiers should continue in such a state of subordination; therefore artificers, being enlisted regularly as soldiers, ought undoubtedly to become subject to the same law. Such a change was not to be accounted any hardship; since no species of trial, however popular it might be, was more fair and candid than trials by a court martial. The clause, after a long discussion, was at length carried without a division.

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At the instance of the woollen manufacturers, a bill was introduced in the house of commons, for rendering more effectual, laws against the private exportation of wool. The manufacturers asserted, that of long or combing wool, to the amount of 13,000 packs were annually smuggled to France: hence it was inferred; first, that the wool-growers were by this means enabled within the kingdom to keep up the price of their commodity beyond its just standard, to the great detriment of our staple manufacture; secondly, that there ensued a loss to Britain of the surplus value of the manufactured articles over the raw materials, and of the increased population, which the employment of an additional number of manufacturers would produce; and thirdly, that the smuggled wool being an article necessary to the

Bill against
the smug-
gled export-
ation of
wool.

* Debates of the peers, 1788.

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French manufactures, it enabled them to rival ours. In answer to these arguments, it was contended, chiefly by country gentlemen, that it was an unnecessary and unjust attack upon the landed interest. The quantity alleged to be smuggled bore no proportion to the whole produce of the country, and subtracted only about a fifteenth share, even at the calculation of the proposers; but there was no evidence of the calculation being just. The price of wool was not enhanced beyond its just standard: as a proof that the manufacture was not injured by it, they demonstrated the increase of the value of woollen goods, exported from the year 1776 to the year 1787, to be in the proportion of nearly one-third. Upon the second inference it was said, that admitting the quantity of wool stated to be smuggled into France, it did not follow that our manufacturers would work up that additional quantity above what they now do, merely by preventing its making its way thither; on the contrary, unless it were first proved, which had never been asserted, that, in consequence of the exportation, the manufacturers are in want of materials to work upon, it was fair to conclude, that the quantity exported was a mere surplus, and that the British manufacturers would not work a single pound more, though the whole should be kept at home: a view of the very flourishing state of our manufactures was sufficient to convince us that there was no ground of apprehension from the rivalry of France. It was replied, that the restraints proposed to be laid upon the wool-growers would not materially affect their interests. The present bill was consonant to the existing laws, and was only designed to carry into more

more effectual execution those principles of policy, respecting the exportation of wool, by which this country for so many years had been governed, and under which both our manufacturers and our wool-growers had flourished and grown rich together. The bill underwent a very minute discussion, in which party politics appeared to occupy no share; and at length was carried by a large majority.

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A subject of very considerable importance, and which long occupied the attention both of parliament and the nation, was this year for the first time brought before the house of commons: this was the celebrated question concerning the trade carried on for purchasing negro slaves to cultivate our possessions in the western world.

Commence-
ment of an
inquiry
concerning
negro
slavery.

Slavery is so evidently repugnant to the feelings of a Briton, that it may at first sight appear astonishing no means had been devised to prevent the existence of such a state in the British dominions. The mercantile character of this country predominated over the political, when, for the acquisition of wealth, she admitted the destruction of freedom; and the guardians of European liberty became the most active instruments of African slavery. This inconsistency did not appear to have impressed any of the most zealous and powerful champions of constitutional freedom, during the greater part of the eighteenth century. Planters and traders, who are the most frequent and constant observers of this state, were not likely to testify an abhorrence of a system, by which they were so considerable gainers, or even perhaps to feel the adequate detestation for oppressions, with which they were so familiar.

State of
facts.

General and
special ob-
jections to
slavery.

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It is im-
pugned as
enimical to
christianity,
as well as
justice and
humanity.

Pious and
benevolent
enthusiasm
in favour of
the negroes.

familiar. Statesmen might overlook some rigours, through which they conceived the nation derived private and public wealth; and the people in general were too distant to consider the condition of the negroes. Nevertheless, the mild and liberal principles of British policy seemed extremely inimical to human thralldom; and the doctrines of benevolent philosophers were totally hostile to such a practice; but neither enlightened policy, nor ingenious theory, were the causes which at this period produced a prevalent enmity to slavery: a more rapidly operative principle exerted itself in favour of negro freedom: religious zeal was infused into the subject, and, engaging the passions of many individuals, stimulated them much more powerfully than the deductions of moral science, or the dictates of political wisdom. An opinion was eagerly disseminated, that the state of slavery was incompatible with christianity. This notion seems to have been drawn from the consideration of detached passages, rather than from the general spirit of that admirable system. The religion of Jesus, seeking the happiness of mankind, finds its sources in the disposition and character of the individual; and comprehending the vast variety of situation and sentiment, delivers general rules, enforced by cogent motives, for performing the various duties of social and civil life; political establishments and gradations it leaves to be formed according to the circumstances of the case, and character of the people. Philanthropy, which mingled with a piety sincere, though somewhat eccentric, distinguished many of the earliest votaries of negro freedom; and in the ardour

ardour of benignant project, overlooked difficulties of execution; indeed, perhaps, rather indulged itself in fancying advantage from the change, than accurately ascertained the probability of benefit, even should their wish be accomplished. In the southern provinces of America, soon after the establishment of their independence, the quakers presented a strong and pathetic address to the several legislative assemblies; in which they exhorted these bodies to abolish slavery; and in many instances emancipated the negroes in their own possession. In Britain the same sect first followed the example of their American brethren, and presented a similar petition in 1787 to parliament. The cause, embraced by the enthusiasm of religion and benevolence, procured a great number of votaries. From sympathy and imitation, it became extremely popular; literary ingenuity was not wanting, and no works were read with such avidity, as compositions which decried negro slavery. As usual in controversy, one side of the question only was considered by its supporters, and the statement of propositions was such, as to render conclusions obvious. A topic repeatedly employed was, DIFFERENCE OF COLOUR IS NO REASON FOR FORFEITURE OF LIBERTY. On so trivial a truism very popular pamphlets were founded; eminent divines embraced the cause; recommended it from the pulpit, and in printed discourses. Churchmen and dissenters concurred in eagerly inculcating the abolition of slavery; many were so far transported by philanthropic feelings, as to declare their readiness to forego all the advantages and habitual gratifications which arose from

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from our West India islands, rather than enjoy them through the compulsory labour of their fellow-creatures. With this enthusiastic zeal, hypocrify, as usual, occasionally mingled; and there were demagogues who, without possessing much tenderness of disposition themselves, courted popularity by coinciding with the humane sentiments, which were so generally diffused. For a considerable time a stranger might have supposed, if he judged from prevalent discourse and writing, that the African negroes monopolized misery, and therefore, that the highest duty of christian benevolence was to afford them relief. While this fervour predominated, a society was formed to collect information on which to ground a petition to parliament; and a very considerable sum of money was subscribed in order to defray the expence.

Mr. Wilberforce; talents, character, and laudable zeal of.

Among those who took the most active share in endeavouring to relieve the negroes, was Mr. Wilberforce, member of parliament for the county of York. Of good talents, active and indefatigable industry, and extensive knowledge, this gentleman held a high place in the public estimation; and possessed considerable fortune and influence: these advantages he uniformly directed to such pursuits as he thought conducive to virtue, religion, and the happiness of his fellow-creatures. Conceiving the cause of the negroes to be that of piety and humanity, he had employed persevering labour, in order to learn the particulars of their treatment; and viewing the subject as a British senator, he attempted to reconcile political expediency with what he deemed a discharge of christian and moral duty.

From

From these motives he was believed to have entered much more minutely into the detail of the slave-trade, than any other member of the legislature.

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Opposite
arguments.

While one party exerted itself so strenuously to render the abolition generally popular, and thereby prepared to facilitate its passage through parliament, another with less animation and impressiveness of eloquence, but with a considerable share of sound reasoning, laboured to prove, that the advantages alleged to be consequent upon abolition were ideal, and founded upon abstract theories of philanthropy, without a knowledge of the existing case. The evil of slavery (it was said) depends on opinion: that state is universally prevalent in Africa; and the minds of the negroes are habituated to its contemplation, as one of the most common conditions of life. Having the principles of dissension and hostility in common with other men, the African tribes are often engaged in war: one consequence of war is captivity; the usual treatment of captives is either massacre or sale. The market for slaves, independent of European purchasers, is comparatively inconsiderable in Nigritia. The chance to the individual of escaping butchery, in a great measure depends on the demand from European traders. Carried to the West Indies, the negroes are on the whole well treated: by some individual masters they may have been hardly used; but in general, as can be proved from persons most conversant with these countries, they are contented and happy. Severity is not the interest of planters; and if even malignant passions transport masters or their delegates to unwise cruelty, the recurrence of

Slavery an
evil great
or small,
according to
the circum-
stances and
sentiments
of the suf-
ferers.

The condi-
tion of A-
frican ne-
groes is me-
liorated by
becoming
slaves to
British mas-
ters.

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Slaves in
our planta-
tions gene-
rally happy.If Britain
abolish
slavery,
other Eu-
ropean
states will
reap the
benefit.

such acts may be prevented by judicious regulations. Narrow in their views, the negroes like other savages repose their chief happiness in the supply of animal wants: indolent and improvident, they are often deficient in the exertions requisite for their maintenance. Nothing is more frequent in Africa than famine, which destroys great numbers of the inhabitants; whereas in the West Indies they have abundance of provisions. To a Briton, death, either by sword or famine, may be preferable to life and slavery; but to a Nigritian the case is far different: by transporting him to a situation, in which his animal wants are fully supplied, where by personal exertions he can modify slavery, and has nothing to fear from either famine or a victorious enemy, you place him in a higher state, according to his estimate of good, than if you had suffered him to remain in Africa. The slave-trade does not on the whole violate humanity, because it does not on the whole diminish that happiness which humanity seeks to promote. The culture of the West India islands, so productive a source of private opulence and public revenue, depends upon labourers inured to such a climate. Were we to forego the advantage of such possessions, what would be the consequence? the other European states would take up the benefits which we abandoned: the slave-trade would be still carried on, though Britain did not participate. It would not be real generosity, but romantic extravagance, to abstain from so advantageous a commerce, when we ourselves should lose, and our rivals only should gain by its discontinuance. Very great capitals have

have been embarked, both in the West India islands and African slave trade, under the sanction of public faith, which guaranteed the commerce by many internal regulations and foreign treaties for rendering it productive. Are we to sacrifice a great and valuable property to philanthropic chimeras, totally unfounded in fact and experience?

Petitions and remonstrances containing such topics, for and against the abolition, were presented to the house of commons and privy council. A committee of the latter was appointed for investigating facts. Mr. Pitt finding that the information hitherto collected was not sufficient to authorize parliamentary discussion, on the ninth of May proposed, that the consideration of the slave-trade should be deferred till the commencement of the next session; meanwhile, the inquiry which was instituted before the privy-council would be brought to such a state of maturity, as to make it fit that the result should be laid before the house, that it might facilitate their investigation, and enable them to proceed to a decision, founded equally upon principles of humanity, justice, and sound policy.

Sir William Dolben introduced a measure of intermediate relief, in a bill for regulating the transportation of African natives to the British West Indies: the object of this proposition was to accommodate the slaves, during their passage, better than had been hitherto done. It was intended to limit the number who should be conveyed, in proportion to the tonnage of the vessel; to secure to them good and sufficient provisions, and other matters equally conducive to their health, and their accom-

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Great capitals embarked in this trade, which is a large source of riches and revenue. Petitions for and against the slave-trade. The council institutes an inquiry into the details and alleged cruelties.

Sir William Dolben's motion for regulating the transportation of negroes,

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is passed in-
to a law.

Mr. Pitt's
bill for the
relief and
recompence
of the Ame-
rican loy-
alists.

modation. While the bill was pending, a petition was presented from the merchants and other inhabitants of Liverpool, praying to be heard by their counsel against this regulating bill: this request being granted, it was contended at the bar of the house, that the proposed reduction of number would essentially injure the trade, and that it was founded on an assertion of hardships which did not exist. The plea of the merchants was not made out to the satisfaction of the house; and the bill, though in a small degree modified, passed unanimously, without any material alteration. In the house of lords it underwent such changes, that the commons considered its original object as not attained: a new bill was accordingly introduced, which passed both houses, and received the royal assent.

About the same time, Mr. Pitt called the attention of the house to a different class of sufferers, the American loyalists, and the losses sustained by them through their adherence to the parent country during the late war. Commissioners had been appointed to enquire into the claims; and in consequence of their report, the minister divided the claimants into four classes. In the first class he ranked those who had resided in America at the commencement of the war, and who, in pursuance of their principles of loyalty and adherence to Britain, were obliged to abandon their estates and property in the colonies; which were in consequence seized and confiscated by the revolters. The mode he meant to adopt*, with respect to this class of loyalists,

* See Annual Register 1788, p. 13.

whom

whom he considered as having the strongest claims of any, would be to allow the full amount* to those whose demands were so small, that any deduction from them would materially affect their means of comfortable existence. The second class of claimants were persons who, having resided in England during the war, made claims upon alleged loss of property in America: these were not sufferers in the same degree as the first class, because they had not been driven out of America, but had made their choice: though, however, their option was to remain in England, still they were entitled to expect compensation for the loss of property in America, which they had incurred through a preference of this country: he proposed respecting this as the former class, that property affording only the means of comfortable subsistence should be paid in full of the established claims; but that beyond the sum deemed requisite, the deduction should be considerably greater†. The third class

* His proposition was, “ that all such loyalists shall receive the full amount of their losses, as far as the same do not exceed the sum of ten thousand pounds; and shall also receive, where the amount of such losses shall be above ten thousand pounds in the whole, and not above thirty-five thousand pounds in the whole, ninety pounds per cent. of such part of the said losses as shall exceed ten thousand pounds; and where such losses shall be above thirty-five thousand pounds, eighty-five pounds per cent. of such of the said losses as shall exceed ten thousand pounds; and where the same shall be above fifty thousand pounds, eighty pounds per cent. of such part of the said losses as shall be above ten thousand pounds.”

† That from all those claims, amounting from ten thousand pounds to thirty thousand, a deduction should be made of twenty per cent.; and a farther additional deduction of

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consisted of loyalists who had either enjoyed places or exercised professions in America, but were driven away in consequence of their loyalty to this country, and lost their income. With regard to these it was to be considered, that though they had been expelled from America, they were able to obtain fresh incomes in this country, by exercising their talents and their industry: he therefore proposed, that all whose incomes did not exceed four hundred pounds a-year, should receive half-pay; persons whose incomes were higher, should receive forty pounds for every hundred above four hundred, and under fifteen hundred; and beyond that sum, at the rate of thirty per cent. The fourth class of claimants consisted of those who had been obliged to leave their habitations and property in consequence of the cession of that country at the late peace: as their loss had been incurred by a national act, without any alternative of their own, he proposed that they should be completely reimbursed by the public. He then stated the sum to which the established claims amounted. The propositions which he founded on this account were received with great approbation, and a resolution for the payment of the same, after some modification, was unanimously adopted. Thus, sufferers through loyalty and patriotism to our sovereign and country, received from the national munificence a liberal compensation for the damages which they had sustained.

twenty per cent., in progression, upon every additional fifty thousand claimed.

A con-

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Commence-
ment of the
trial of Mr.
Hastings.

A considerable portion of parliamentary attention was directed to the prosecution and trial of Mr. Hastings. In consequence of the order of the house of lords, near the close of the last session, to the defendant to deliver answers to the charges alleged against him by the house of commons, on the prescribed day he appeared at the bar, and presented answers. Of these the lords sent a copy to the house of commons; the answers being read, Mr. Burke moved, that they should be referred to a committee which should have the conduct of the prosecution. This measure being embraced, Mr. Pitt proposed Mr. Burke as the first member; the house unanimously concurring, Mr. Burke named Mr. Francis, and to support his nomination, stated the immense advantages which would accrue to the committee from the very extensive knowledge of that gentleman. The abilities and information of Mr. Francis were universally allowed; but great political differences had subsisted between him and the accused, in India, and some personal animosity was conceived to remain; on these grounds a great majority of the house voted against the motion. The rest of the committee consisted of the same gentlemen who had been delegated to present the charges to the lords; and in addition to them, Mr. Wilbraham, Mr. Fitzpatrick, and Mr. Courtney. To the answer of Mr. Hastings, two days after, Mr. Burke brought from the committee a replication, averring the charges to be true, and that they would be ready to prove the same against him before the lords, at such convenient time and place as should be appointed. The reply

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being carried by Mr. Burke to the peers, Wednesday the thirteenth of February was fixed for proceeding upon the trial in Westminster-hall ; and the members of the recently appointed committee were nominated managers for conducting the trial. Mr. Fox proposed that Mr. Francis should be added to the committee ; but the majority of the house continued to oppose the insertion of his name *. The

* Mr. Francis at this time, in a very able speech, entered into an account of his conduct respecting Mr. Hastings, for the last thirteen years, both in India and in England ; which, though in some degree individual justification, contains much important statement and remark on the general subject concerning which the differences existed. Mr. Francis and Mr. Hastings having fought a duel, and the former gentleman having been dangerously wounded, they had exchanged forgiveness ; in what sense that forgiveness was to be interpreted, Mr. Francis explained in the following passage :—
“ It was my lot to be dangerously wounded : as I conceived immediate death inevitable, I thought of nothing but to die in peace with all men, particularly Mr. Hastings. I called him to me, gave him my hand, and desired him to consider in what situation my death would leave him. By that action, and by those words, undoubtedly I meant to declare, that I freely forgave him the insult he had offered me, and the fatal consequence which had attended it. I meant that we should stand in the same relation to each other, as if the duel and the cause of it had never happened. But did I tell him that, if I survived, I would renounce the whole plan and principle of my public life ? that I would cease to oppose his measures ? On my return to England, I found that a parliamentary inquiry into the late transactions in India was already begun, and I was almost immediately ordered to attend one of the committees employed upon that inquiry. Could I, without treachery to the public, refuse to give evidence or information necessary for the public service, when it was demanded of me by the authority of the house of commons ?” See Parliamentary Debates.

committees

committees were appointed by both houses to search the records of parliament, for precedents relative to the mode of proceeding in trials by impeachment; and the necessary orders were made for their accommodation in Westminster-hall, for the admission of spectators, the attendance of witnesses, and other matters respecting the regularity of their proceeding. On the thirteenth of February the trial commenced with the usual formalities*. Mr. Hastings being called into court, the lord chancellor addressed him in the following terms:

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“ Warren Hastings,

“ You stand at the bar of this court, charged with high crimes and misdemeanors; a copy of which has been delivered to you: you have been allowed counsel, and a long time has been given you for your defence; but this is not to be considered as a particular indulgence to you, as it arises from the necessity of the case; the crimes with which you are charged, being stated to have been committed in a distant place. These charges contain the most weighty allegations, and they come from the highest authority: this circumstance, however, though it carries with it the most serious importance, is not to prevent you from making your defence in a firm and collected man-

* The house of commons, about eleven o'clock, preceded by the managers of the impeachment, who were led by Mr. Burke, came from their own house into the hall. The lords, half an hour after, entered from the house of peers: first, official attendants on the house in a rising series, commencing with the clerks, and terminating with the judges; afterwards the peers, beginning with the junior barons, and ending with the prince of Wales.

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ner; in the confidence that, as a British subject, you are entitled to, and will receive, full justice from a British court." Mr. Hastings answered:

"My lords,

"I am come to this high tribunal, equally impressed with a confidence in my own integrity, and in the justice of the court before which I stand."

The two first days being employed in reading the charges, the third was appointed for opening the same, stating the nature and quality of the imputations, the evidence by which they were to be supported, and the guilt which, to the defendant, if they were proved, would attach. Never had an inquiry of more magnitude been instituted before a judicial assembly. The question was, whether a man to whom a trust affecting the happiness or misery of millions had been delegated, in the discharge of his office, had been a faithful or unfaithful trustee to his employers, the protector or the scourge of the immense and populous regions committed to his care? The question derived a very high additional importance from the character of the accused, whom friends, enemies, and impartial men, concurred in deeming a person of the most powerful and comprehensive talents; from the character of the accuser, whom friends, enemies, and impartial men, concurred in esteeming a person of the most extraordinary genius, multifarious knowledge, and splendid eloquence, that had ever graced a British senate. The anxiety of the public to hear Mr. Burke speak upon so vast a subject, against Mr. Hastings, brought an immense concourse of hearers to the hall.

The

The court was assembled to the number of one hundred and sixty-four peers, and the chancellor having called the managers to proceed, Mr. Burke rose and said, that he stood forth by order of the commons of Great Britain, to support the charge of high crimes and misdemeanors which they had exhibited against Warren Hastings, esq.; and that he had a body of evidence to produce to substantiate the whole and every part of those charges. The gentlemen who were joined with him in supporting the impeachment, had instructed him to open the cause with an account of the grounds on which the commons had proceeded; a general view of the nature of the crimes alleged; and with an explanation of concomitant circumstances that were necessary to elucidate the accusation. The dreadful disorders of our Indian government were acknowledged; it was not till after every mode of legislative prevention had been tried without effect, till they found, during a course of fourteen years, that inquiries and resolutions and laws were equally disregarded, that they had recourse to a penal prosecution. The crimes imputed were not errors of human frailty, nor the effects of imperious necessity; they originated in the worst passions, and evinced a total extinction of moral principle: they were committed against advice, supplication and remonstrance, and in defiance of the direct commands of lawful authority. The accused was the first in rank, station and power, under whom as the head all the speculation and tyranny of India was embodied, disciplined and paid; and in striking at whom, therefore, they would strike at the whole corps of delinquents.

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Speech of
Mr. Burke.

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The evidence, which supported the charges, in many instances amounted to the clearness and precision required by the English law; but a considerable part did not reach municipal accuracy. The prosecutor contended, that it was a right of the house of commons, in an impeachment, not to be bound by the confined rules and maxims of evidence prevalent in the lower courts; nor by any other than those of natural, immutable and substantial justice *. This mode of interpretation was due to suffering nations, who were unconcerned in our technical distinctions, but on the great principle of morality wished punishment to follow guilt. It was highly necessary to prevent the disgraceful imputation † which might fall either upon that high court, as if it were corrupted by the wealth of India, or upon the laws of England, as impotent in the means of punishing successful fraud and oppression. Descending from preliminary observations to the actual subject of the charge, he stated the relations in which Mr. Hastings stood, and the duties which from these he had incurred; in order to prove his transgressions. The powers delegated to Mr. Hastings by the India company, and which he was charged with having

* This doctrine, that the rank and dignity of the assertor constituted a just ground of difference in the criterion of proof, is certainly not logically accurate; neither would it be politically wise, that the quality of the accuser should affect the requisite testimony, as in a criminal case there would be a substitution of authority for proof, which might subject liberty, property, and life, to arbitrary caprice.

† This argument proceeded on a supposition, that the high court was to be influenced by the fear of censure from misapprehension, instead of giving judgment according to the merits of the case.

abused,

abused, were derived from two sources; the charter bestowed by the crown, under the authority of parliament, and the grant from the mogul emperor of the Dewannee, or high stewardship of Bengal, in the year 1766. He exhibited an historical account of the company from its first establishment, the powers which it had delegated to Mr. Hastings, and which Mr. Burke charged him with having abused. He next proceeded to the rights with which the company were invested by the mogul emperor, to the collection of the revenue delegated by the company to Mr. Hastings, and which he also charged him with having grossly violated. The alleged violation of duties so originating, and abuses of powers delegated for such general and specified purposes, Mr. Burke represented with an eloquence which so astonished and agitated every hearer of fancy or sensibility, as for a considerable time to preclude the exertion of that judgment that could distinguish pictures from realities. Having exhibited Mr. Hastings as a monster of flagitiousness and crimes, he concluded with a peroration which described the nature of the cause, accusation, accused, accuser and tribunal, in all their constituent parts, and closed with the following words: "Therefore it was with confidence ordered by the commons, that I impeach Warren Hastings, esq. of high crimes and misdemeanors: I impeach him in the name of the commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled, whose parliamentary trust he has betrayed:

"I impeach him in the name of all the commons of Great Britain, whose national character he has dishonoured:

"I impeach

“ I impeach him in the name of the people of India, whose laws, rights and liberties, he has subverted, whose properties he has destroyed, whose countries he has laid waste and desolate.”

Such were the grounds adduced by the orator in a speech which occupied three hours for four days successively. Mr. Burke having concluded his account of the substance, Mr. Fox addressed the court on the mode of the charges: he stated, that the committee proposed to open and adduce evidence which should substantiate one charge at a time; to hear the prisoner's defence and evidence upon that charge, and afterwards to reply; and to proceed in the same manner in all the other articles. Mr. Hastings's counsel being asked if they consented to this mode? replied in the negative. The manner proposed was, they said, contrary to the practice of all courts of justice, and was inconsistent with all principles of equity. After some debate it was resolved, that, according to the usual practice on trials, the prosecutor should complete his case before the accused commenced his defence. Mr. Fox opened the Benares charge, which he brought down to the expulsion of Cheyt Sing; the following part was finished by Mr. Grey: Mr. Anstruther conducted the examination of evidence, and summed up the whole of that article. Mr. Adam, on the fifteenth of April, opened the second accusation respecting the Begums: Mr. Sheridan examined the witnesses, and summed up the charge; the last that came before the court, during that session of parliament.

Another

Another accusation of Indian delinquency was brought before the commons in the conduct of sir Elijah Impey. This task was undertaken by sir Gilbert Elliot, who, in a very able and eloquent speech, maintained two general principles; that India must be redressed or lost, and that the only means left of reforming Indian abuse, was the punishment, in some great and signal instances, of Indian delinquency: he stated the nature, the occasion, and the purposes of the commission with which sir Elijah Impey was sent out to India, as involving circumstances which were strong aggravations of his guilt, and increased the necessity of its punishment; that in the two grand objects which were committed to his charge, the protection of the company from the frauds of its servants, and of the natives from the oppression of Europeans, he had, by corruptly changing sides, added his new powers to the very force they were intended to control, and taken an active part in the oppressions which it was his duty to have avenged. Sir Gilbert Elliot presented to the house six distinct articles of accusation.

The subject of the first was the trial and execution of Nundcomar; the second, the defendant's conduct in a certain Patna cause; the third, intitled *extension of jurisdiction*, comprehended various instances, in which the jurisdiction of the court was alleged to have been exercised illegally and oppressively, beyond the intention of the act and charter; the fourth charge, intitled the Cossijurah cause, though also an allegation of illegal assumption, was distinguished (according to the statement of

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of the accuser) by circumstances so important, as to become properly the subject of a separate article; the fifth charge was for his acceptance of the office of judge of the Sudder Dewannee Adaulut, which was contrary to law, and not only repugnant to the spirit of the act and charter, but fundamentally subversive of all its material purposes; the sixth and last charge related to his conduct in the provinces of Oude and Benares, where the chief justice was said to have become the agent and tool of Mr. Hastings in the alleged oppression and plunder of the Begums.

Sir Elijah Impey on his defence contended, that in the acts which were charged he had not exceeded the powers entrusted to him as supreme judge. Respecting the first and most important article, the trial and execution of Nundcomar for forgery, he had been accused of extra-judicial interference. Neither Nundcomar (it was contended by sir Gilbert Elliot) nor the person whose name was forged, were subject to the jurisdiction of the English court. By the laws of India, forgery is not punishable capitally; and thus a man was put to death by a court to which he was not amenable, for a crime not capital by the laws to which he was amenable. Sir Elijah Impey argued, that though the authority of the supreme court did not extend over all the inhabitants of the English provinces in India, it included the inhabitants of Calcutta. Nundcomar had not been tried as a native of Bengal, but as an inhabitant of Calcutta; where he resided, and where of course he was amenable to the laws of the place. A motion being made in the house, resolved into a committee, that

that the first charge exhibited against sir Elijah Impey contained matter of impeachment, it was negatived by a majority of seventy-three to fifty-five; and it was afterwards voted, that the other charges should not be taken into consideration.

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This year Mr. Grenville proposed certain amendments and additions to the bill brought into parliament by his father, for the better regulation of the trials of controverted elections. When the existing act had been proposed, Mr. Grenville said its principal aim was to take the trial of petitions on controverted elections out of their hands, and to place them in a committee so constituted, likely to do strict justice to the parties. That object, it was universally allowed, had been fully answered; but collateral inconveniencies had been incurred, which, intent on the main end, the author had overlooked. Ever since the bill had passed into a law, an infinite number of petitions, complaining of undue elections, had been presented in the first session of every parliament; and many of them, after having taken up much of the time of the house, had proved frivolous. To prevent the interruption of public business, he proposed, that the committee empowered to determine whether the election petition presented, or the defence offered in answer to it, was frivolous, should adjudge the payment of costs against the party to blame. This was merely an act of justice; yet such a regulation would save much expence to individuals, and much time and trouble to the house. The present was the most proper season for considering and determining such a subject,

Mr. Grenville's bill for improving his father's law respecting contested elections.

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a subject, as there was actually no petition concerning elections before the house, and the minds of members were therefore perfectly cool and open to impartial deliberation. The bill was introduced, passed both houses without opposition, and received the royal assent.

Supplies.

On the sixth of May, the financial plan for the year was proposed by Mr. Pitt. The minister observed, that several extraordinary expences had been necessarily incurred; in the navy there was an increase beyond the peace establishment of 446,000l.; in the army of 233,000l.; and in the ordnance of 61,000l. These augmented demands were occasioned by the circumstances of our putting the distant possessions of the country into a state of more complete defence, and were not to be considered as the permanent necessary expences of the nation; and to these there were several sums to be added, which could not occur again, or at least could not make a part of our settled yearly expence: such was the sum for the relief of the loyalists, the expence of the late armament, and the vote for the payment of the debts of his royal highness the prince of Wales; these demands added together amounted to 1,282,000l. which was to be considered as extraordinary, and consequently to be deducted from the settled regular establishment of the country. It had been deemed wise to put every part of the British dominions into such a posture of defence as to secure the blessings of peace. Notwithstanding the extraordinary expences incurred, the receipts of the country had fully answered even unforeseen demands, without deviating

deviating from the plan which the legislature had adopted for diminishing the national debt. When such were the savings in a year of unusual expence, as our resources were fast increasing in the extension of commerce, and the improvement of revenue, we might most fairly infer that our financial concerns were in a state of progressive melioration: it might be well argued from probable causes, that such a country as England, blessed with peace, must rapidly increase in the various constituents of prosperity; that she did so, was ascertained from fact and experience: he had formed an estimate from an average of four years: the revenue of 1783 amounted to ten millions, besides the land and malt tax: the revenue of 1787, with the same exclusion, amounted to thirteen millions; the additional imposts had not exceeded a million and a half; hence the other million and a half must have arisen from the suppression of smuggling, and extension of trade: he was about soon to adopt farther regulations for the restrictions of fraud, and commerce was very fast rising, so that he augured a much greater excess of receipt beyond expenditure. Mr. Sheridan, with an ingenuity that evidently surpassed his investigation of financial details, endeavoured to controvert the ministerial statements, but did not succeed. The supplies granted this year were eighteen thousand seamen, and about twenty thousand landmen, besides those who were on foreign service; no new taxes were imposed, but a lottery was appointed. The various departments of duty occupied parliament until the eleventh of July, when the houses were prorogued by a speech from the

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throne. His majesty thanked the legislature for their uniform and diligent attention to the laborious services of the present year. To the house of commons he expressed peculiar gratitude for the readiness and liberality with which they had granted the requisite supplies. Hostilities had commenced between the imperial sovereigns and Turkey, but he received the strongest assurances from the respective powers of their amicable dispositions to this country. The security and welfare of his own dominions, and the preservation of the general tranquillity of Europe, were the objects of engagements which he had recently formed with the king of Prussia and the states-general.

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Affairs of the continent.—Objects of imperial combination.—Catharine prepares to visit the Crimea.—Attempts to seduce the christian subjects of Turkey.—At Cherson she meets her confederate Joseph.—State of the Turkish empire.—Com-motions in Egypt.—Reasons which disposed Turkey to strike the first blow.—Treaty of the pacha with the Mamelukes.—Catharine proposes extensive cessions by Turkey to Russia, as the only means of securing peace.—Turkey indignantly rejects these claims;—declares war against Russia.—Ma-nifesto.—Counter-manifesto of Russia.—Joseph II. without any provocation joins Russia against the Turks.—Mighty preparations.—Manifesto of the emperor.—Commencement of the campaign.—The emperor takes the field.—Generous indignation of the Ottomans against the imperial aggressor.—Wise and skilful conduct of the vizier.—Military reforms of the emperor.—Injudicious and precipitate, they disgust his soldiers.—Operations ineffectual.—Obliged to act on the de-fensive.—The Turks overrun the Bannat.—Dismay seizes the imperial armies.—Operations of Russia.—Effect of the aggressive confederacy on neighbouring states,—on Great Britain.—Britain resumes her character of the protector of Europe.—Thwarts the imperious designs of Catharine.—Russians capture Oczakow.—State of Sweden.—Interfe-rence of Catharine in the internal affairs of Sweden.—At-tempts to stir up revolt against Gustavus.—The king resents this conduct.—War.—Military and naval operations.—Refractory spirit of Gustavus's officers.—Defensive confede-racy between Britain, Prussia, and the states-general.—Principles of this treaty.—Different views of Messrs. Fox and Pitt on this scheme of alliance.—Internal occurrences.—Retirement of lord Mansfield from the King's-Bench.—Momentous improvements during his judicial supremacy, especially in mercantile law.—Strict and liberal interpreters of the law have their respective advantages and disadvan-tages.—

tages.—Lord Mansfield of the latter kind.—Principle of his decisions in undefined and unprecedented cases.—The Justinian of English commercial law.—General character.

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Affairs of
the conti-
nent.

Objects of
the imperial
combina-
tion.

THE attention of Europe was at this time principally occupied by the conduct and operations of its eastern powers. The confederacy between Austria and Russia, originating in the causes and directed to the objects which have been already commemorated, had been long engaged in maturing its plans. Ever since the conquest of the Crimea, Catharine was occupied in desultory war with the Tartar tribes, adjoining her frontiers. Immensely superior as the Russians were in force and discipline to these hordes, yet rapid irruptions annoyed those who could have easily repelled regular warfare. Catharine proposed either to conciliate the hostile Tartars by proffered kindness, to dazzle them by displayed magnificence, or to intimidate them by manifested power*. The reduction, however, or pacification of these hordes was but a small part of the mighty designs, to promote which she deemed it expedient to visit her late acquisition the Cherson. This journey, planned in 1786, was executed in 1787, but before that time the Tartars produced a change in her original intention. As soon as the intended progress was known, and its believed object was reported, instead of either dazzling or terrifying the Tartars, it became a signal of general and immediate danger, to cement their union in the strongest manner, and urge them to the greatest possible exertion, and determined resistance. Catharine diminished a considerable part of her des-

* History of the Reign of Catharine, vol. ii. book x.

fined splendor, when not likely to answer her purpose, and a great portion of her military force, which, in the war with the Tartars, could be so much more usefully employed elsewhere; she still had various purposes to accomplish, by visiting the confines of her own and the Turkish empire. She had employed by her agents very skilful, incessant, and extensive efforts, to seduce the christian subjects of the Ottoman Porte. Mistress of the principal country in which the Grecian faith prevails, she had declared herself the friend and protectress of the Greek church in all parts of the world; her partizans were very numerous in the heart of the Turkish empire, and she did not doubt, by a near approach, to stimulate their zeal, and rouse them to schemes of ready co-operation *. Aware of the imbecility of her son and heir, she had rested the hopes of talents, similar to her own, on the puerile promise of her two grandsons. The second of these princes received the name of Constantine, was dressed and educated from his childhood according to the manner of the Greeks, and always attended by a guard of Grecian youth, who were formed into a corps for that purpose: in short, she endeavoured to excite the wishes and hopes of the Greek christians, that the empire of the east should be restored under a prince who bore the name of its founder. This youth she proposed to carry with her to the frontiers of Turkey, but indisposition prevented his attendance: she farther designed to inspect her new dominions, to estimate their value, both as actual possessions, and the means of farther acquisition. While the empress thus pursued her grand project,

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 Catharine
 prepares to
 visit the
 Crimea.

 She attempts
 to seduce
 the christian
 subjects of
 Turkey.

* See Annual Register, 1787.

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At Cherfon
she meets
her confede-
rate Joseph.

she was anxious to concert measures with Joseph, at once her confederate and tool; and for that purpose invited him to meet her at Cherfon: the king of Poland too was present at this congress. Though Stanislaus was far from being able to yield active assistance to the confederates, yet, by the position of his kingdom, he could afford the two empires important aid against the Ottomans, by enabling them to unite their force, and act in perfect concert along the whole line of frontier belonging to European Turkey. At this congress the system of aggression appears to have been completely adjusted, although farther preparations were resolved before it should actually commence.

Meanwhile, report had carried to Constantinople the intended progress to the Cherfon, and had represented with her usual exaggeration the superb splendor which was originally designed. Catharine, it was said, was about to be crowned empress of Taurida, and to be declared protectress or authoress of the nations of Tartars*. A christian was, by ostentatious triumph, to insult Mussulmen, whom she had outraged by usurpation. Were Turks so degenerate from their ancestors, as to suffer such insolence and spoliations with impunity? Were those Ottomans who had kept the whole christian world in awe, now to be trampled by a power, till within this century scarcely known in Europe? These considerations influenced the Turks to hostilities, in which they might have appeared precipitate, if it had not been evident that they speedily either must attack or be attacked themselves. War

* Annual Register, 1786.

was now, undoubtedly, the purpose of Catharine and Joseph : the question, therefore, with the Turks was, which was the wisest time for commencement? Various circumstances in the situation of the Turkish empire were unfavourable to war : in the northern part of the grand seignior's territories the influence of the Russians was not only generally great, but conspiracies were with strong reason suspected to have been formed by the governors of the two principal provinces, Moldavia and Wallachia, to join the combined empires. In the east the prince of Georgia had renounced his allegiance, and even made successful inroads into Asia Minor. The Persians attempted hostilities on the side of Bassora. In the south, the turbulent beys involved Egypt in civil commotions *. These insurrections were believed to have been fomented by the Russian consul at Alexandria, and were headed by Murat Bey, a Mameluke chieftain. The dreadful contests almost desolated that fertile country before any assistance could arrive from Constantinople. Hassan Bey, the grand admiral of the Turkish empire, being consulted, formed a project for not only crushing the present insurrection, but annihilating as a separate class the Mamelukes, whose ferocity and rapacity had so long oppressed and plundered Egypt ; and for this purpose to extinguish the order of the beys which had headed and directed these outrages. When this essential resolution should be effected, he intended to divide the country into five distinct governments, under the immediate authority of the Porte, and all the officers of its new

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State of the
Turkish
empire.

Commotions
in Egypt.

* See Annual Register 1786, chap. viii.

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appointment. An armament, comprehending two strong fleets, twenty thousand land forces, with a train of artillery, plentifully supplied with stores and provisions, and equipt with equal secrecy and dispatch, arrived at Rosetta before the rebellious beys had entertained the smallest conception of such a design. The pacha immediately marched against the Mamelukes, waiting to receive him with a more numerous army. After being repeatedly superior, he gained one decisive victory at Grand Cairo, made himself master of all lower Egypt, compelled the rebel chieftains to fly into upper, and was preparing to pursue them into those regions, with the confident expectation of completely accomplishing his design. The situation of the beys now appeared desperate, and another year probably would have enabled the pacha to overthrow the Mameluke power. Should hostilities commence with Russia and Germany, the whole force of Turkey must be exerted against these formidable enemies; the pacha and his army must be immediately recalled: a declaration of war, therefore, was a necessary dereliction of the pacha's project, when it was about to be crowned with complete success. On this view, policy appeared to dictate that war should, if possible, be deferred; on the other hand, besides the general advantage from striking the first blow, there were special reasons of considerable weight for anticipating the certain intentions of the christian empires. Catharine, conceiving the time of beginning the war to depend upon herself and her ally, had not been hasty in preparation, and was at present chiefly occupied in providing for her own security in the north and west, before she, with her confederate, proceeded

to invade the security of her neighbour in the south and east. Engaged in negociation with the powers in the western vicinity of her capital, and not intending to go to war during that campaign, she had suffered her military equipments to proceed slowly. Her finances were by no means in a condition favourable to the increased demands of hostilities; she had been greatly exhausted by the former war: and though her projects and improvements might ultimately tend to enrich her country, yet her establishments, both for splendor and for force, together with her profuse largesses to her favourites*, or at their instance, were extremely expensive; and her present expenditure actually exceeded her present income.

The sultan had beheld with most indignant resentment the ambitious usurpation of Russia; from her invasion of the Crimea, he appealed with success to his subjects, both as Turks and mussulmen, on the treatment which he had received; he aroused their patriotism, and their religious enthusiasm; animated by such incentives, he trusted that their native courage would operate, and that the ability of the pacha, aided and supported by other officers, would give it discipline and direction: great western powers, he not only inferred from their policy, but knew from their assurances, would interest themselves in a contest so materially affecting the balance of Europe, which they had ever been so anxious to preserve. The vast accession of treasure from the capture of Cairo, the depository of Mameluke riches in addition to their usual

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Reasons
which dis-
posed Tur-
key to strike
the first
blow.

* Memoirs of Catharine, *passim*.

revenue,

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Treaty of
the pacha
with the
Mame-
lukes.

revenue, placed the Turkish finances in a flourishing state *. From the situation of his enemy, the state of his own resources, and, beyond all, the spirit which diffused itself through his people, notwithstanding the successes of his armies in Egypt, he resolved immediately to withdraw them from the south, and employ them in striking the first blow against the autocratrix of the north. The grand pacha, hearing from Constantinople that his talents and military force might be required elsewhere, lamented the cause, but did not repine at the order; and since he could no longer hope to subvert the Mamelukes, endeavoured to avail himself, as much as possible, of the advantages which they must still retain. In these circumstances he discovered political ability not inferior to his military; he cautiously concealed both his intention of leaving Egypt and its cause, and intimated to the beys, that, though, as they themselves must be sensible, his power was able to effect their speedy destruction, yet his master and he would more willingly dispense pardon than punishment. The Mamelukes gladly listened to these overtures, and entered into a negotiation, in which the pacha so completely wrought upon their fears, that he compelled them to purchase, with their still remaining treasures, the forbearance of a war which he had previously determined to abandon. Hassan, having thus despoiled and reduced the revolters, returned to Constantinople with such treasures as had not been brought thither for many years, and were alone sufficient to

* Annual Register, 1788, chap. i.

invigorate

invigorate all the preparations for war. The conduct of the Russian ministers at the Turkish capital since the last peace, had been haughty and imperious, without exciting any strong expressions of resentment on the part of the Ottomans. Bulgakow, the ambassador, having been called to attend his mistress at Cherson, on his return repeated a set of propositions * which were laid down by the empress as the basis of a new treaty, and as the only means of establishing on a permanent footing the tranquillity of both empires. The general principle of the proposed contract was, the most extensive and important cessions to Russia by Turkey, without any equivalent; indeed a surrender of a great part of a territory. So dictatorial and insolent a proposal was immediately rejected; the divan, not satisfied with this

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Catharine proposes extensive cessions by Turkey to Russia, as the only means of securing peace.

Turkey indignantly rejects those claims.

* They included, besides the admission of a Russian consul at the port of Varna, within a hundred and twenty miles of Constantinople, which had long been an object of much solicitude, a total renunciation of the sovereignty of Georgia; which, as that ill-defined denomination of territory might be extended to all the neighbouring countries, as well as to Mingrelia, would have afforded sanction to all the past and future encroachments of Russia on that side. Another proposed condition, and still harder to be admitted, was a new settlement of the provinces of Moldavia and Wallachia, by which their governors, generally called in Europe princes, were to hold them by hereditary succession, and in a great measure independent of the Porte. But the most singular claim, perhaps, of any, was that upon Bessarabia, which, as having once belonged to the Tartar khans, Russia now demanded; a principle of no very limited operation, and which, if pursued to its full length, would have made the usurpation of the Crimea a lawful title to all the conquests of Tamerlane. Annual Register, 1788, p. 9.

absolute

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absolute refusal, proposed a set of conditions, not only as the basis of a treaty, but as the only means for preserving peace. The leading article was the restoration of the Crimea, that had been usurped by Russia, with others of a similar nature; and producing a written instrument, which contained the proffered terms, they required the Russian to sign them on the spot. Bulgakow declared his incapability of subscribing any conditions, without express orders from his mistress, and desired time for receiving instructions concerning some of the articles: but respecting the Crimea, he avowed, that he could not venture to mention such a proposal to his sovereign; and that he well knew, in no fortune, and in no circumstances whatever, could she ever be reduced to relinquish the sovereignty of that country. A barbarous custom prevailed under Turkish ignorance and despotism, of imprisoning foreign ambassadors on a rupture with their principals; accordingly, Bulgakow was sent to a castle with seven towers, allotted to alleged offenders against the state: but he was treated with much more indulgence than former captives in such circumstances had there experienced. Two days after, on the eighteenth of August 1787, war was declared against Russia. The manifesto presented to the christian ambassadors, stated the good faith* and the strict attention to the terms of the treaty of Kainardgi, which the grand seignior had uniformly observed; and to this conduct contrasted the continued violation of the most solemn conventions by

and declares
war against
Russia.

Manifesto.

* See State Papers, August 24, 1786.

Russia.

Russia. The empress had instigated the prince of Georgia to rebellion, and supported him by her troops against the sultan his sovereign: she had deprived the inhabitants of Oczakow of the benefit of the salt mines, which not only from time immemorial had been open to them, but which were expressly stipulated by treaty to be held in common by both nations. Russia, through her agents, had endeavoured to corrupt and seduce the subjects of the Porte: she constantly interfered in the internal policy of the Turkish empire, and presumed to dictate to the sultan, insomuch that when the pachas, governors, or judges, by a faithful discharge of their duty, displeased her, she arrogantly demanded their removal or punishment. The complaints in the manifesto respecting commerce were equally numerous; and the whole detail endeavoured to establish, and in many cases with success, a spirit of encroachment, rapacity, usurpation, and insolence, on the part of Russia. The court of Peterburgh had regarded Turkey with so much contempt, as to entertain not only no apprehension, but no idea that they would commence hostilities, and received the manifesto with astonishment. The counter-manifesto * was expressed in that lofty style which Russia had used since the peace of Kainardgi; and represented Turkey as holding all which she possessed by her merciful bounty exercised at that treaty: it repeated her former justification of her conduct respecting the Crimea, and, vindicating in detail her own acts, endeavoured in

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Counter-
manifesto of
Russia.

* See State Papers, Sept. 13, 1787.

the

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Joseph II.
without pro-
vocation
joins Russia
against Tur-
key.

the usual tenor of such productions, or where argument was wanting, by bold assertion to throw the blame upon her adversary. As the season of 1787 was so far advanced before hostilities began, no very important operations took place. The Turks made several attempts on Russian fortresses, but were not successful. The Russians contented themselves with defensive efforts; reserving offensive exertions for the next campaign. During the winter the French and Spanish ambassadors made several attempts to mediate between the belligerent powers, and to procure an armistice. The grand vizier declared the proposal to be totally inadmissible, from its affording every advantage to Russia, and none to the Porte: their perfidious enemy, whose rapacity and ambition were insatiable, would gladly put them off their guard, and amuse them with a negociation, until her preparations were complete. The Porte now demanded of the Imperial ambassador, what part his master intended to take in the war? That minister, having applied for the emperor's instructions, answered by his prince's directions, that his Imperial majesty, as the friend and ally of Russia, was bound by treaty to furnish her with eighty-thousand men, in case of war; that if the Porte should consider this engagement as an act of hostility, he was prepared to abide the consequences; but, on the contrary, if they should choose to maintain the good understanding which subsisted between the two empires, he would with pleasure undertake the office of mediator, in order to prevent the effusion of blood.

Great

Great preparations were made in all parts of the emperor's dominions: four armies were ordered to be assembled; one at Carlstadt in Croatia, under the command of general de Vins; another at Peterwaradin in Hungary, commanded by general Langlois; a third on the borders of Lithuania, under general Febris; and the fourth in the Bucowine, headed by the prince of Saxe-Coburg. On the tenth of February 1788, the emperor declared war against Turkey; in his manifesto * there is not a single sentence asserting the least ground of complaint from Austria on her own account: the whole pretext is, that the Porte had not acceded to the reasonable requisitions of the empress of Russia, and had maltreated her envoy; that by this conduct the Porte had manifested hostile disposition to the emperor, who was in alliance with the empress of Russia. "The Porte (says this manifesto) were not unacquainted with the strict bonds of amity and alliance which unite the courts of Vienna and Petersburg: of this occurrence they were informed, as well by verbal insinuation, as by a memorial presented towards the close of the year 1783. This was accompanied with an energetic representation of the nature of this alliance, and the danger of encountering its force: the Ottoman court have, therefore, themselves only to blame, if the emperor, after being for many years employed in the preservation of peace, and in his endeavours to live with them on the best terms, and after having seized upon every opportunity of amicable intervention,

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His mighty
preparations.

Manifesto
of the em-
peror.

* See State Papers, Feb. 10, 1788.

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Commence-
ment of the
campaign.

finds himself at length obliged by their conduct to comply with his engagements to the empress, and take a part in the war into which she finds herself so forcibly drawn." Such were the principles of morals exhibited in the emperor's declared reasons for a rupture with the Turks, from whom he did not allege that either he or his subjects had received the slightest provocation. He went to war with an unoffending nation, and plunged his own country in all the evils of hostilities, that he might fight the battles of the empress of Russia.

Before his declaration he began his enmity by an ineffectual attempt to surprise Belgrade, which believed itself to be still in a state of peace: six chosen regiments of imperial infantry were, at a season of peace, dispatched in two divisions to attack this fortress: by some failure in the time and place of rendezvous, the one body did not arrive speedily enough to assist the other: the first detachment formed under the fire of the garrison and town, without any prospect of being joined by the second. The Turkish governor was well prepared for their reception, and with great coolness sent a polite message to the Austrian commander, expressing his surprise at seeing, in a season of profound peace, such an appearance of troops on their territory, and in the precincts of a fortified city; only requiring farther to know the cause or motive of their coming. The Austrian leader answered, that hearing a party of Turks was preparing to surprise the neighbouring city of Semlin, he had advanced to counteract their scheme; but that, finding himself mistaken, he would withdraw his troops. Though the excuse

was

was accepted, yet conscious of their own intentions, and afraid that the moderation of the Turks was only affected, the Imperialists crossed the Saave with great precipitation, and lost a considerable number of men. An attempt of the same kind was, before the termination of the peace, made by the Austrians upon the frontier fortrefs of Turkish Gradisca: this place they endeavoured to take by assault, but were repulsed with the loss of at least five hundred men killed and wounded.

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War being now declared, both parties made dispositions for regularly commencing the campaign. The emperor applied to the court of Warsaw for leave to pass through the Polish dominions, if requisite, in order to form a junction with the Russians. The king and permanent council replied, that they had no power to grant the passage demanded, as it entirely depended on the general diet. The emperor had intended to force a passage, if refused, but found it expedient to change his resolution. He also requested the consent of the Venetians to a Russian fleet to be received into their harbours, but his requisition was absolutely refused. Notwithstanding these disappointments, the Imperial troops took the field. The emperor joined his principal army about the middle of April, being on the south side of the Danube, and about to invest the small fortrefs of Schabatz in Servia. The investment was deferred until the emperor's arrival, that he might have his share of the military glory that would accrue from such an atchievement. The place was obviously incapable of resistance, and was easily captured. The triumph of this

The emperor takes the field.

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victory,

C H A P.

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Generous
indignation
of the Ot-
tomans
against the
imperial ag-
gressor.

victory, however, was soon balanced by a check which prince Lichtenstein's army received about the same time at Dubicza. That prince having carried on his approaches regularly against the fortresses, and made a breach, which he deemed practicable, resolved to attempt it by storm. The animosity of the Turks was vehemently enflamed against the Austrians: in their estimation the emperor was an officious intermeddler in quarrels which did not concern him or his territories; he endeavoured to take advantage of their recent misfortunes, and without provocation to insult and despoil those whom he conceived unable to resist his power: they considered him as invading them without even any pretence of wrong, or any other motives than those of a robber and common enemy to mankind: they were inspired with generous eagerness to make so flagrant aggression recoil on the head of its author. This indignant spirit, so merited by its object, pervaded all ranks of the Turkish host; invigorated their efforts against the Imperial armies, during the whole campaign; and turned upon the offender that defeat and disaster, which he had projected against those who were doing him no wrong. The garrison of Dubicza, being reinforced before the assault was attempted, instead of waiting for the enemy, threw open their gates, and rushing out, attacked the intrenchments, forced them sword in hand, and compelled the foes to raise the siege with the loss of two thousand men*. The grand vizier, who commanded the principal army in Bul-

* See Annual Register 1788, chap. ii.

garia and Silistria, was a man of very vigorous abilities: he knew the troops under his command, and the enemy with which he had to cope: reviewing the history of former wars, and the relative character of the contending forces, he saw that, since the art of war in christian countries had been reduced into a regular system, the Turks, devoid of discipline, were generally unsuccessful, through a prevalent impolicy of hazarding pitched battles, which depended chiefly upon tactical skill; he, therefore, resolved to pursue a plan much more adapted to his materials: fierce as the Ottomans were in natural courage, stimulated by strong incentives, and animated by partial successes, he was fully aware that they were very much inferior to German discipline; he, therefore, resolved not to hazard a general engagement, unless absolutely necessary, but to employ the energy of his forces in attacks on posts and detachments, in which the discipline of the enemy could be of little avail. This mode of warfare would give full scope to the qualities in which the Turks excelled, and prevent the effectual operation of those in which their enemy was so superior: he thus intended to train his troops to obedience, discipline, and military skill, to give them continual opportunities of signalizing their valour in encounters with the enemy; and gradually to approach to decisive combat, as he found his forces increase in tactical knowledge and efficiency. While the inventive mind of the grand vizier was exerting itself in devising changes necessary for his object, and thus improving the means entrusted to his direction, the visionary fancy, and flimsy understanding of Joseph, was occupied in projects of reform,

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Wise and
skilful con-
duct of the
vizier.

Military re-
forms of the
emperor.

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1788.

Injudicious
and precipi-
tate they
disgust his
soldiers.

which tended to render his materials worse instead of better. Applying to military subjects the same general principle which distinguished his civil government, *that change is improvement*, he contrived a variety of innovations, far from being conducive to the purposes of war, and really inimical to success, because they disgusted his soldiers. After having profusely lavished his treasures in equipping mighty armies to fight the battles of another, he endeavoured to exert his œconomy by making hard bargains with dealers in corn and cattle, contrived new modes of supplying his troops with necessaries; and by these reforms reduced his armies, before the close of the campaign, to the greatest scarcity, distress, and consequently discontent*.

His opera-
tions are
ineffectual.

The first considerable battle which took place after Dubicza, arose from an attack made by the Turks on the prince of Saxe-Coburg; and though, after a furious contest, they were repulsed by the arrival of an Austrian reinforcement, yet they, being joined by fresh troops, renewed the engagement: for several successive days they fought with various fortune; but the Turks astonished the Austrians by their furious valour: with their spears they did not fear to meet hand to hand, the enemy with their guns and bayonets, and shewed themselves unappalled by the formidable artillery to which the Germans so much trusted. The Austrians had commenced the campaign with a thorough contempt of their adversaries, and a confident expectation, that the only difficulty they had to encounter would be from the speed of the enemy's

* See Annual Register 1788.

flight,

flight, but they now underwent a total change of opinion and sentiment, and by a natural transition regarded their foes as the most terrible of mankind. Dislike to the war against an enemy who had been so much mistaken, and discontent on account of the emperor's innovations, was strongly enhanced by the resentment which they entertained against the Russians for not co-operating with the Austrian efforts: the emperor himself was irritated at the commencement of the war, so different from his sanguine hopes, and, indeed, confident declarations, and determined to venture on an exploit which had been held out as the first object of the campaign; this was the siege of Belgrade; he accordingly adopted measures for speedily carrying the project into execution. The vizier, with an army of eighty-thousand men, advanced to the relief of this most important fortress, and occupied a strong position, covered by the Danube in front, Belgrade and the Saave on the left, the fortress of Orsova on his right, and garrisons on his rear. The Imperial army, instead of persevering in their design upon Belgrade, returned to Semlin; and the invaders acted avowedly upon the defensive: various encounters took place, in which great numbers were slain on both sides; but the loss of the Austrians was the greater. Besides war, the Germans had to contend with a still more dreadful enemy in a pestilential fever, very frequent in the Danubian lower provinces, and most destructive to armies which come from higher and more healthy countries; the inactive indolence, under which the grand army languished at Semlin, added to this distemper: as

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Obliged to
act on the
defensive.

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the season advanced to the sickliness of autumn, the mortality became more dreadful; and before the close of the campaign, at least the half of one of the finest armies that ever marched from the Austrian dominions, without performing a single exploit of any note, perished, partly by the sword, but chiefly by disease.

On the side of the Buccovine, where the prince of Coburg commanded, the war languished in the beginning of the campaign, from the failure of the Russians in effecting a junction. The object of the confederates on that side was to invest the fortrefs of Choczim; and a body of Russian forces arriving, at length, in the beginning of July, preparations were made for the siege: the attempt was greatly facilitated by the governor of Moldavia, who, having been before corrupted by the Russians, treacherously surrendered the country on the first approach of the enemy. The combined generals conceived the reduction of Choczim would immediately follow the investment; but they were mistaken: the seraskier, who commanded the garrison, conducted his defence with such intrepidity and skill, that, after undergoing the severest hardships for upwards of two months, he, at last, on the twenty-ninth of September, obtained a most honourable capitulation. The capture of Choczim closed the campaign on the frontiers of Poland. The army third in force employed by the emperor, was that which acted on the side of Croatia, and had been compelled to raise the siege of Dubicza. Prince Lichtenstein's bad health having compelled him to resign the command, he was succeeded by
marshal

marshal Laudohn: under this veteran officer the Austrians, dejected by the disappointment, both of the secondary and principal armies, began to recover their vigour and confidence. Laudohn made a second attempt upon Dubicza, which after a very gallant defence he compelled to surrender: he afterwards invested the fortress of Novi, which in the month of October capitulated. He proposed to close the campaign by the reduction of Gradisca, after Belgrade, the principal fortress on the north-west frontier of Turkey, but from the strength of the place, and the autumnal rains, was compelled to raise the siege. General Fabre, with the fourth army, contended with the Turks on the borders of Transylvania, where, being obliged to act in the defensive, after many bloody contests, he was so far successful as to prevent the enemy from penetrating into the country. The grand vizier, instead of imitating the quiescent example of the emperor's army at Semlin, was active in annoying the dominions of the invader. One of the most fertile portions of lower Hungary is the Bannat of Temiswar, divided by the Danube from the Turkish Servia, and the fortress of Belgrade. The vizier made bridges over the river, and sent great detachments, that he might either desolate and despoil so rich a tract of the enemy's country, or compel the emperor to leave Semlin for the protection of the Bannat, and thus expose his enfeebled army to the continual attacks of the Turkish cavalry, in a dry, firm, and open country. The Bannat is a tract, which, from the strength of its capital, and its vicinity to the strong posts in the mountains of Transylvania,

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The Turks
overrun the
Bannat.Dismay
seizes the
Imperial ar-
mies.

is extremely difficult to be conquered; but having no other fortrefs of note, besides Temiswar, it is easy to be over-run by any army that commands the field, and is secure on the side of the Danube; therefore the vizier wisely resolved not to attempt the conquest, which would be operose and ultimately unproductive, but to over-run the country, from which the advantage to himself would be immediate, by the extreme fertility and high cultivation of the province, and the distress to the enemy would be grievous and ruinous: he accordingly put his design in execution, invaded the Bannat, and spread desolation wherever he went.

Terror and dismay pervaded the Imperial armies and provinces, and even Vienna itself, when they found that, instead of those conquests for which the war had been undertaken, the richest dominions of the aggressor were now seized by the defender: they conceived that, instead of Constantinople, Vienna might again be the scene of attack. The emperor, as the vizier had foreseen, sent troops to the relief of his province; and a large division of the grand army was attacked by the Turks on the eighth of August with such fury, at Orsova, near the northern bank of the Danube, that they were defeated, and a dreadful slaughter ensued. The emperor now thought it necessary to quit his camp at Semlin, and march northward to cover Temiswar, and secure his communication with his forces in Transylvania. The vizier being reinforced with large bodies of troops, closely followed his enemy: several engagements took place, in one of which the Austrians were defeated with the loss of no less than five thousand

thousand men, and were obliged to abandon their camp with terror and disorder, and the remainder of the forces took refuge in Temiswar and Transylvania. The autumnal rains having set in with uncommon violence, the vizier found, that to keep the field would be ruinous to his troops, as little inured to the extreme cold and wet, as their enemies were to the extremes of heat; and now that he had effected his purpose of doubly annoying the foe, by despoiling his richest territory, and defeating his strongest army, he re-crossed the Danube, and returned to Belgrade. At Constantinople, great as was their joy for the victories of the vizier, both the people and court were much displeased with the evacuation of the Bannat. The sultan, notwithstanding his condition, so very unfavourable to either intellectual or moral excellence, was really a prince of sagacity, prudence and moderation. He perfectly comprehended the policy of his officer, its reasons and motives, and did justice to both. The emperor in November returned to Vienna; having, for such immense expences, and losses, of this very bloody and destructive campaign, the ruin of so valuable a province, acquired three fortresses of little significance. Such were to Joseph the first year's consequences of unprovoked aggression.

The preparations of the emperor had been formed, in the reliance that a very strong force from Russia would co-operate with him on the Danube. Such had been the plan concerted between the Imperial courts, and such, as we have seen, the failure of the execution. The empress of Russia, in seeking the alliance of Joseph, had considered her own advantage

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Operations
of Russia.

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advantage solely, without any regard to the interest of her confederate: she deemed him a powerful tool, whom, by working on his weakness, vanity, and ambition, she could apply to her own use: she had left him to promote her views at his expence, by weakening her enemy on one side, while she should direct her efforts to her own sole benefit on the other. Joseph was defeated; and lavished the blood and treasure of his subjects, without any advantage to Austria; nevertheless, he thereby effectually served Russia: he employed the chief Turkish force, and by his disasters, incurred with such struggles, facilitated her acquisitions. Her first object was to enlarge and secure her possessions on the Black Sea, and to form such a body of power as could not hereafter be shaken. From the immense extent of her dominions, much time must necessarily elapse before her armies, spread through the interior country, could reach the frontiers. She, meanwhile, equipt a powerful fleet, destined for the Mediterranean, and another naval armament for the Black Sea. In the former war she had experienced no hostile opposition, from any of the maritime powers, to her plan of obtaining a footing in the Mediterranean, and was by the mistress of the ocean seconded in that scheme. Now, a different plan of policy was adopted; both the maritime and other powers of Europe regarded the confederacy between the two empires, with a jealousy which increased as its objects unfolded themselves; but principally directed against the member most powerful both in resources and in personal character, and whose aggrandizement it tended

Effect of
the aggressive
confederacy on
the neighbouring
states;

ed chiefly to promote. The smaller states firmly resolved not to support a combination by which they themselves might be eventually crushed; the greater determined, if necessary, to oppose a confederacy by which their own independence might be endangered: what part Prussia might take could not be affirmed from either the declarations or conduct of that court, though it might be easily inferred from its interest. Spain and France were known both to be friendly to the preservation of the Turkish empire; and internal affairs only prevented the latter from manifesting her disposition in hostile interference. Holland was founded on the occasion; her conduct it was foreseen, would be chiefly governed by the example of England. It became a subject of great political anxiety how England was to act in the present case: some supposed, that inspired by resentment for the hostile conduct of Russia in the armed neutrality, and her manifest indifference to friendly intercourse, more recently exhibited, she would now oppose her naval schemes: others argued, that this was the time for procuring most beneficial commercial arrangements from Russia by seconding her favourite object. Those who were most thoroughly acquainted with the present British government, concluded that it would not be determined by so contemptible a motive to public conduct as resentment, but would be guided by policy; that not confining its political estimates to mere commercial gain, it would include ultimate security, and that Britain would resume her appropriate character of protector of Europe, from whatever quarter its indepen-

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on Britain.

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Britain re-
sumes her
character
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the imperi-
ous designs
of Catha-
rine.

dence and security might be endangered. England soon manifested a determination not to second Russia. The empress had employed agents to hire British ships for serving as tenders and transports to her fleet, and a considerable number was provided for that purpose, when a proclamation in the London gazette, prohibiting British seamen from entering into any foreign service, threw a fatal damp on the design. This was attended with a notice to the contractors for the tenders, that the engagement for shipping must be renounced ; that the ships would not be permitted to proceed ; and that government was determined to maintain the strictest neutrality during the war. In hopes of diminishing this great disappointment, Russia applied to the republic of Holland for a sufficient number of transports to answer the purpose ; but that government refused to comply with the request, and also declared its resolution to maintain the strictest neutrality ; and Catharine's expedition to the Mediterranean was laid aside. On the Black Sea the prince of Nassau commanded the Russian fleet, and the captain pacha the armament of Turkey. Prince Potemkin, with an army of a hundred and fifty thousand men, approached the Euxine, on the banks of the Bog. The first object of this expedition was the reduction of Oczakow, a very strong fortress near the Bog, and on the Black Sea, which, as the frontier garrison of Turkey in that quarter, was of the highest importance in her wars with Russia, but more indispensably necessary since her ambitious adversary had occupied the adjacent Crimea. The preparations of attack and defence corresponded

responded with the value of the object. On the twelfth of July, Potemkin invested this fortress, aided by his fleet: the Turkish troops did not exceed twenty thousand men, nor, indeed, would the garrison have easily contained a greater number of defenders. During five months this gallant and intrepid band resisted the whole Russian host. In the sixth, the apparent hopelessness of effort, together with the inclemency of winter, seemed about to force the besiegers to desist from their attempt; when Potemkin, ashamed of making so little progress with so great a power, on the seventeenth of December, as the last effort, ordered a general bombardment and cannonade of the place with red-hot balls to commence. One of these fell upon the grand powder magazine, which, being still amply provided, blew up with so terrible an explosion, as to demolish too great a portion of the wall to admit of the fortress being any longer tenable: the Turks still made a most desperate resistance, both in the breach, and in the streets; but they were at last overpowered, and the place was taken by storm.

While these hostilities were carrying on between the Imperial powers and the Turks in the south, war suddenly broke out against Catharine in the north. Sweden, beyond most nations, had reason to regard Russia with resentment, since by that power she had been driven from the high place which, during the seventeenth century, she had held among the powers of Europe. Fear, however, of force so enormous, had restrained the expression of resentment, and produced an apparent connection between the two countries; and there was always at

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The Russians capture Oc-zakow.

State of Sweden.

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Interference
of Catharine
in the in-
ternal poli-
tics of Swe-
den.

at the court of Stockholm a strong and numerous party favourable to Russia. It was an uniform policy of the court of Petersburg, to govern by influence and intrigue foreign states, which they could not so easily command by power: this means of influence was carried to a much greater extent by Catharine, than by any of her predecessors. One of the chief instruments of her foreign politics, was the seduction of subjects from allegiance to princes, from whose civil dissensions she expected to derive benefit. It was, indeed, a part of her plan to weaken the executive authority in the countries which she wished to direct, that from contest there might be the more frequent occasions for her interference *. As the Swedish revolution, whatever its other consequences might be, strengthened the executive government, it was very disagreeable to Catharine. Although perfectly satisfactory to the lower classes, it was and continued to be, as she well knew, extremely hateful to the aristocracy, whose peculiar privileges it had entirely destroyed: thus there was a great faction in Sweden inimical to the measures of the king; and this party Russia very constantly supported. Gustavus was thoroughly acquainted with these intrigues: the Swedish king was impressed with an idea, that the liberties of the north were exposed to imminent danger from the power and ambition of Russia, and the chief object of his policy was to secure weaker neighbours against the aspiring Catharine. These sentiments he endeavoured to communicate to Den-

* See Memoirs of Catharine II. *passim*.

mark,

mark, and incite that country to vigilance: meanwhile he bestowed the closest attention on the internal improvement of his own kingdom, with such effect, as justified the apprehensions entertained by Russia from the Swedish change of 1772. A prompt, firm, executive government; union and decision in the cabinet, with a tolerable degree of apparent harmony between the king and the deliberative orders of the state, succeeded to anarchy, weakness and discord; there was a good and amply supplied army, with an excellent fleet, and such a well-regulated state of finances, as would give energy to both in case of emergency. A situation of affairs so different from the wishes of Catharine, she formed various projects for embroiling, though at the same time she heaped the strongest expressions of regard on the prince, whose government she was ardently desirous of disturbing. She professed a wish to assist, with her experience and counsels, such an illustrious pupil; invited him to Petersburgh, and actually gave him advice to introduce among his subjects innovations, which, if adopted, must have rendered him unpopular. Gustavus had penetration to discern the motives of the empress; and private dislike added to public jealousy. Catharine, desirous of swaying the counsels of Sweden by her influence, was enraged with Gustavus for successfully opposing her artifices; and the Swedish monarch detested his neighbour for her endeavours to render him dependent. The design of subverting and partitioning the Ottoman empire, with the vast military preparations for carrying the project into execution, could not but increase in the highest degree

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degree the apprehension and alarm of the king: he saw by the last war the inability of the Turks to combat the power of Russia only, how then could they be supposed capable now of resisting the immense combined force of both empires? If Russia was already too formidable for the repose and safety of her neighbours, how must she appear when clothed and armed in the spoil and force of the Ottoman empire. Distant and heterogeneous as the Swedes and Turks were, common interest had often before united them against Russia. The feebleness of the Swedish government, however, under Gustavus's father, and the revolutionary designs of the son had prevented either from taking a part in the preceding war. Differently circumstanced now, the king of Sweden in spring armed by land and sea. The empress pretended, and to many even appeared, to disregard these preparations, and did not deign to inquire into their object. She, however, replenished her magazines and forts in Finland with ammunition, troops, and provisions: she was indefatigable in exercising her usual insidious policy to stimulate and promote dissensions between the sovereign and his subjects. She had two classes in Sweden from whom she expected co-operation in her designs against its prince: the first consisted of the ancient aristocracy, which, without any attachment to Russia, submitted to her influence, in the hopes of recovering, through her, their former constitution: the second of those who, through bribery or other inducements, had really become partisans of Russia, but pretended to adopt the views of the nobility. On the

On the former she depended as the dupes of her schemes, which they would believe beneficial to Sweden; the latter, she knew, would be the willing and ready agents of her designs, without any regard to the interest or security of their country. Through these parties she constantly relied that she would be able to subvert the present government of Sweden, and render that nation a dependency upon Russia. While her emissaries were active in spreading dissatisfaction through Sweden, and Gustavus was persevering in his equipments, the empress ordered her ambassador to deliver a memorial to the Swedish ministry, which, in a very few pages, presents a sketch of that policy by which Catharine endeavoured to promote discord. Its manifest object was to stir up the subject to sedition and insurrection against the sovereign: it was not addressed to the king, to whom only, by the laws regulating intercourse between nations in the great European republic, it ought to have been addressed: it was directed to all ranks and classes of his subjects, with whom, by the law of nations, a foreign sovereign could have no ground of correspondence. This document professed the highest regard for the Swedes, represented the interest of the people as separate from those of the king, and the promotion of the former * as one of her principal objects. Mentioning the preparations of Gustavus, it called on the people to join with the empress in preserving the public tranquillity. A memorial so openly fomenting disobedience and disloyalty, was severely

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She attempts to stir up revolt against Gustavus.

The king resents this conduct.

* State Papers, June 18, 1788.

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War.

Military
and naval
operations.Refractory
spirit of
Gustavus's
officers.

resented by Gustavus, who, in an answer exposed its intent and tendency, and signified to Razouffsky, the Russian ambassador, his majesty's wish, that he should forthwith leave the Swedish dominions. Manifestoes and counter-manifestoes were soon after published, detailing to other powers the alleged grounds of hostilities. Gustavus immediately repaired to Finland, in order to commence warlike operations: he himself commanded the army, and his brother, the duke of Suddermania, the fleet. Various engagements took place by sea between the Swedes and Russians, in which though the former displayed extraordinary valour, and gained several advantages, yet the Russian Squadron (the same that had been intended for the Mediterranean) being much greater in force, formed, directed, and commanded by Admiral Greig, a British seaman, proved superior in the result of the campaign, and was mistress of the Baltic. The king headed so gallant and strong an army that he entertained well founded hopes of proving superior to all the Russian land forces that could be spared from southern operations: but in Russian intrigue he found a more formidable enemy. By the constitution of Sweden it was ordained that war should not be undertaken without the consent of the states; and the present hostilities had not received that sanction. Catharine had directed her policy to the representation and exposure of this unconstitutional deficiency, and with such success, that though the soldiers were eagerly devoted to Gustavus's pleasure, yet a great part of the officers, consisting of the ancient nobility and gentry, declared that

that they could not, without violating their consciences and their duty to their country, draw their swords in a war undertaken contrary to their country's laws: this refractory spirit rendered the campaign in Finland ineffective.

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To counteract the imperial confederacy of aggression, this year a defensive alliance was concluded between the kings of Prussia and Britain, and also these princes respectively, and the states-general, by which, besides reciprocal defence, and the maintenance of the existing constitution of Holland, the contracting parties sought the general preservation of the balance of power: they guaranteed each other from any hostile attack, and engaged in concert to preserve peace and tranquillity: if the one were menaced with aggression, the other, without delay, should employ its good offices, and the most efficacious means, to prevent hostilities, to procure satisfaction to the party threatened, and to settle things in a conciliatory manner: but if these applications did not produce the desired effect in the space of two months, and if one of the parties were hostilely attacked, the others undertook to defend and maintain him in all the rights and privileges, and territories, which he possessed at the commencement of hostilities. The general principle of this treaty was that which wise policy dictated for British interference in continental affairs, security, and the maintenance of that order and balance on which the safety and independence of Europe rested. From the general object of the treaty, the contracting parties had, no doubt, in view the Imperial confederacy, which, if its progress were not checked,

Defensive
confederacy
between
Britain,
Prussia, and
the states-
general.

Principle of
this treaty.

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Different
views of Mr.
Fox and
Mr. Pitt
on this
scheme of
alliance.

had so strong a tendency to endanger the tranquillity and safety of other states. The interests of England were as essentially concerned, as those of Prussia, in preventing the ascendancy of Russia and Austria.

Mr. Fox's project of continental alliance was to connect ourselves with Austria as in former times, that, should a war arise with France, such a powerful enemy might divide her attention, and prevent it from being, as in the late war, chiefly directed to maritime affairs. Mr. Pitt's plan was to form continental alliances according to existing situations: France was at present engaged in no scheme of policy, likely either to affect the general safety of Europe, or to provoke England to a war; she was, indeed, deeply occupied in plans for remedying the evils of former ambition: what system of alliance might be wise in circumstances not existing, nor likely to recur, was a question of speculation rather than immediate practicable policy. The emperor was so involved in the projects of Catharine, that an alliance with him would be difficult, and indeed impracticable, except at the expence of adopting his partialities, and seconding the attempts of Russia. In the formidable combination between these two powers, that nation became naturally the ally of Britain, which had a common interest with Britain in watching the conduct and preventing the aggrandizement of the parties; besides, Prussia, together with England, was closely connected with the constitutional party in Holland: however just, therefore, Mr. Fox's reasoning might be, if it were applied to situations that very frequently occurred in
our

our history, yet, in the present circumstances, alliance with Prussia was more valuable to England, than with any other great power.

During the recess, that illustrious sage, who had so long presided over the judicial decisions of his country, in the eighty-fourth year of his age, thought that many years of labour, without reproach, might be followed by a few years of rest, and retired from the judicative bench. For comprehending the law of this particular country, William Murray, a man of the most acute and extensive genius, had prepared himself by a profound study of history, general ethics, the philosophy of jurisprudence, investigation of human passions and conduct, and the civil law, on which the judicial institutions of so great a part of modern Europe are founded. On this basis he raised his superstructure of knowledge of the English code: to the depths of legal science, the accuracy and extent of juridical details, he added the pleasing and impressive accomplishments of an engaging, graceful, and persuasive eloquence. From such an union and extent of qualifications, Mr. Murray very early rose to most distinguished practice. With such opportunities of observing the circumstances of society, of civil actions and engagements, and criminal perpetrations, his penetrating and comprehensive mind saw that the progress of social, and especially commercial intercourse, was producing new combinations, which had not been specifically foreseen when the laws applied to such subjects were enacted; therefore he inferred, that the essential prin-

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Internal occurrences.

Retirement of lord Mansfield from the king's bench.

Improvements under his judicative supremacy, especially in mercantile laws.

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Strict and
liberal in-
terpreters
of law, their
respective
advantages
and disad-
vantages.

principles of justice required such a latitude of interpretation, as would render existing laws applicable to the new cases. The intelligent reader must know that there are two great standards of judicial interpretation; the one the authority of custom, decision, and statute, according to literal definition; the other, according to the general principles of equity, construing particular law, unwritten or written, in such a way as best to answer the great ends of justice. The learned reader must recollect, that at Rome two sects of civilians arose from the above-mentioned difference; the Proculians and the Sabinians*, taking their names from two eminent jurists. The first of these, resting entirely on authority and definition, merely considered the letter of the law: the second, interpreting more freely, endeavoured to adapt it to their conceptions of justice in the case. Each of these modes has advantages and disadvantages: by the former the parties may know the exact rule by which their dispute will be tried, but may find the literal judge diffculted in applying his rule to their case; or entangled by precedents, forms, and definitions, unable to solve the question agreeably to substantial justice: by the latter the parties may, from a just and competent judge, expect an equitable determination of the question; but they depend on his individual understanding and integrity. By deviating from literal explanation, in the progress of construction the law may be changed; and thus the judge

* See account of Justinian's Code, Gibbon, vol. vi.

may

may become a legislator. During the republican periods of the Roman law, strict and rigid interpretation of usages and decrees prevailed: during its imperial history, latitude of construction was gradually substituted. When Tribonian and his associate civilians digested the laws into one great body under Justinian, its constructive character predominated: hence, modern jurists, whose legal doctrines have owed a great part of their formation to the civil law, have interpreted freely. The close precision of English reasoning has diffused itself through municipal institutions, and combining with the English accurate sense of justice, has, in the great body of the law, made so specific provisions for all cases, when the laws were enacted, likely to occur, that it may be safely advanced as a general position, that in every question within the knowledge, foresight, and intent of our lawgivers, the more nearly the decision follows the letter of the law, the more fully will the purposes of justice be answered: but when combinations of engagements and conduct arise, which lawgivers have not specifically anticipated, and on which the judge is called to give decision, he must apply the constructive character of the civil law. The personage before us, partly from his education, in a great measure from having to meet subjects of judicial inquiry, to which neither decisions nor decrees could precisely apply; and, perhaps, also partly from that powerful and comprehensive genius, which in seeking its ends might less regard customary details than adequacy of means, verged more to a constructive than literal

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Lord Mansfield of the
latter kind.

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Principle of
his deci-
sions in un-
defined and
unprece-
dented
cases.He is the
Justinian of
English
commercial
law.

interpretation : but his judgments were just ; they repaired injury, compensated losses, and punished crimes ; they confirmed civil rights, repressed vice, supported virtue, promoted the order and tranquillity of the society. The most fertile sources of new cases, during the long judicial supremacy of this eminent judge, were commerce with its subordinate arts and instruments. In considering the various and diversified contracts of this kind, which neither precedents nor statutes could solve, lord Mansfield resorted to a very simple principle of ethics ; that, where the terms of covenants do not precisely ascertain the extent and obligations, general custom is the most equitable rule of construction. This principle he applied to delivery of goods, insurances, wharfages, bottomry, and an infinite diversity of mercantile and maritime transactions. In the great department of commercial jurisprudence, this illustrious judge formed a code of decisions, digested into a complete system, and may well be styled the **JUSTINIAN OF COMMERCIAL LAW**. Lord Mansfield, with a sagacity almost intuitive, apprehended the scope, unravelled the intricacies, and understood the nature of a case ; discerned whether it was common or new ; and if new, by what general principle or analogy of law its merits were to be ascertained. In his charges to juries, he made the evidence and arguments on both sides, and their comparative force, so very clear, and also the reasons and rules on which he formed his judgment, that every hearer of common understanding must be master of the cause, and of the judge's view of the cause ;

cause; and as his principles of judgment, the result of combined knowledge and wisdom, were uniform, by hearing one charge or decision, you were assured of the decision which he would give in any similar case. The acute penetration of this sage was very happily exerted in eliciting truth from unwilling witnesses; and in the course of his judicial services he was very successful in repressing, not only a great variety of individual attempts at perjury, but in preventing the commission of that crime in certain classes of subjects, in which it was before universally prevalent*. This judge, thoroughly comprehending, not only the general object, but the special compartments of his office, very carefully distinguished between the duties of a civil and criminal magistrate. In the former relation he confined his consideration, at least so far as it dictated his charge to juries, to the *damage sustained by the plaintiff*, without adducing the conduct

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* Especially custom-house questions, and justification of bail. In the former instance the incredibility of oaths was proverbial; in the latter it was customary for persons to attend in Westminster-hall, on the first day of term, offering to bail any person who wanted their services, and to swear themselves to have property to any amount requisite for that purpose. A person who had not five pounds in the world, frequently bailed to the amount of ten thousand pounds in a term. His lordship, having discovered this practice, examined those bondsmen so closely, as to the disposal of their alleged property, that he drove them from that kind of traffic. From his time the perjury of fictitious bail has been discontinued, to the great security of property, and reformation of morals.

of

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General
character.

of the defendant as a reason for enhancing damages beyond the actual injury, the reparation of which was, and must be, the sole ground of a *civil action* *. He did not confound redress for a private wrong with punishment for a public wrong ; but by keeping the administration of civil and criminal justice separate, as intended and prescribed by law, he most effectually answered the purposes of both. Lord Mansfield was frequently reproached with attempting to increase the influence and power of the crown, and was, as we have seen, exposed to great obloquy from factious demagogues, who directed and inflamed the populace at the time : but on investigation it was found, that his opinions on the law of libels were those that had been received by former lawyers and judges ; that if not precisely correct, they were by no means of his invention, but adopted on very eminent authority. With talents to excel in any department, professional excellence was what lord Mansfield chiefly sought, and sought with the greatest success. As a politician his lordship aspired not to the eminence which his abilities could have so easily attained ; and he never was a leader. The measures which he supported during various periods, especially the administration of lord North and his predecessors, were not those on which his character for wisdom could be founded. As an orator he shone brightly, but not unrivalled ; though equalled by few, he was by one surpassed.

The

* This judge was severely blamed for having stated, in his charge to the jury on the trial of the duke of Cumberland,

The engaging and graceful persuasion of a Murray yielded to the commanding force of a Pitt. But as a judge he earned the highest fame, by combining philosophy and detail, by instantaneously and completely apprehending the case; and by accurate discrimination, which, though deviating somewhat from the letter of the laws, bounded his constructions by the lines of equity and justice. In him you could not always find his precedents in the law reports, or his rules in the statutes at large, when neither would apply; but you must recognize his principles and criteria of determination in the immutable laws of reason and rectitude. Lord Mansfield's procedure on the bench was, on the whole, the best that could be adopted by himself, or any other judge of consummate wisdom: how far, as a general model, it ought to be followed by all judges, might be a matter of doubtful inquiry. Perhaps, on the whole, unless a judge be uncommonly sagacious and able, literal interpretation, keeping as closely as possible to precedent and statute, if in some cases it may be an obstacle to what is completely right, yet in a much greater variety is a preventive of wrong.

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land, at the instance of lord Grosvenor, that the rank or condition of the defendant did not entitle the plaintiff to any increase of damages. It was alleged by party writers, that lord Mansfield wished to screen a prince of the blood: but the real and fair interpretation is, that in a civil action the plaintiff applies for the redress of a certain injury; that the injury done, and that only, is to be considered in an award of damages.

His

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His lordship was succeeded by Lloyd Kenyon, who, by professional ability and industry, had risen to be master of the rolls; and now, being chief justice of the king's bench, was called to the house of peers by the title of lord Kenyon.

CHAP. XLI.

Distemper of the king—assumes an alarming appearance.—Peers and commons assemble on the day appointed for the meeting of parliament.—Adjourn for a fortnight till the fact be ascertained.—Physicians being examined, agree that a temporary incapacity exists.—Houses meet to prepare for a supply.—Mr. Pitt moves an inquiry into precedents.—Mr. Fox declares, that in such circumstances the heir apparent has a right to exercise the executive power.—Mr. Pitt contends that the right of supplying the deficiency is in the people, through their representatives.—Lord Loughborough, with some distinctions, agrees with Mr. Fox.—Mr. Fox explains his doctrine, which Mr. Pitt still controverts.—Question brought to issue.—Determined that the supply of the deficiency rests with the houses of parliament.—Mr. Pitt proposes that the chancellor shall be empowered to put the seal to a commission for opening parliament.—After a violent debate, carried.—Frederick duke of York opposes administration.—Mr. Cornwall dying, Mr. Grenville is chosen speaker.—Mr. Pitt's plan of regency—is submitted to the prince of Wales.—His highness expresses his disapprobation and reasons, but deems it incumbent on him to accept the office.—Second examination of the physicians.—Hopes of his majesty's speedy recovery.—Mr. Pitt's plan of regency laid before parliament.—Principle; that the power delegated should answer without exceeding the purposes of the trust.—Details and restrictions.—Scheme reprobated by opposition.—Arguments for and against.—Princes of the blood all vote on the side of opposition.—Warm praise and severe censure of, by the respective parties throughout the nation.—Impartial estimate of its merits.—Irish parliament addresses the prince

to

to assume the regency of Ireland.—Favourable turn of his majesty's distemper.—Convalescence.—Complete recovery.—Universal joy throughout the nation.—His majesty goes to St. Paul's to return thanks.—Festive rejoicings.—Renewed application for the repeal of the test and corporation acts.—Chief sects and most eminent men of the dissenters.—Proposed relief from the penal laws against non-conformists—opposed by the bishops.—Refused.—Slave trade.—Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition.—Arguments for, on the grounds of religion and humanity.—Consideration postponed to the next session.—Mr. Grenville appointed secretary of state,—Mr. Addington speaker of the house of commons. Financial scheme.—A loan required (according to the minister) from a temporary cause.—Mr. Sheridan disputes his calculations.—Bill for subjecting tobacco to an excise.—Popular clamour against this bill.—Passed into a law.—Progressive prosperity of India stated by Mr. Dundas.—Slow progress of Mr. Hastings's trial.—Motions respecting it in the commons.—Session rises.

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THE close of the present year was marked by a signal calamity which befel this nation; but, dreadful as was its first aspect, terrible and afflicting the fears of its continuance, proving only temporary, grief and dismay for its existence were speedily overwhelmed in joy for its removal.

Distemper
of the king

The vigorous constitution and temperate habits of our sovereign, now in the prime of his life, appeared to promise to his people the long duration of a reign directed to their happiness: contemplating his countenance and form, with natural health, invigorated by exercise, and secured by regularity of living, his people confidently expected, that the paternal goodness, which for twenty-eight years

years they had experienced, would, after twenty-eight years more, be still exerting itself for their benefit; but the prospect was now overcast.

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In the latter end of autumn all ranks were alarmed by a report that his majesty was seriously indisposed. On the twenty-fourth of October resolved, notwithstanding illness, to perform the functions of his royal office, he held a levee; and though it was obvious to every one present, that his majesty's health was very materially affected, yet no symptoms indicated any definite species of malady. On the king's return to Windsor, his distemper assumed a very alarming appearance; it was found that it had formed itself into a brain fever, attended with a delirium, so often resulting from that dreadful disorder. The mental derangement having continued to the beginning of November, without any intermission, at length became public; and the intelligence diffused grief and consternation among his loyal and affectionate subjects. The prince of Wales repairing to Windsor to the queen, these personages were attended by the lord chancellor, and concerted measures for the management of his majesty's domestic affairs in the present emergency. Meanwhile, all those who, by their rank and situation in the state, were required to take a part in so new and unexpected an exigence, assembled in the capital. Mr. Fox had spent part of the recess in Switzerland; to him, as a man from whose extraordinary abilities most beneficial advantage was expected, an express was immediately dispatched, and he hurried to England. The twentieth of November was the day on which the prorogation of

assumes an
alarming
appearance.

The peers
and com-
mons as-
semble on
the day ap-
pointed for

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the meeting
of parlia-
ment.

They ad-
journ for a
fortnight
till the fact
be ascer-
tained.

Physicians
being exa-
mined,
agree that
a temporary
incapacity
exists.

parliament was to expire ; and the meeting took place as a matter of course. The peers and the commons remained in their separate chambers ; the chancellor in the upper, and Mr. Pitt in the lower house, notified the cause of their assembling without the usual notice and summons, and stated the impropriety of their proceeding, under such circumstances, to the discussion of any public business ; and both houses resolved unanimously to adjourn for fifteen days. Mr. Pitt observed that, if his majesty's illness should unhappily continue longer than the period of their adjournment, it would be indispensably necessary for the house to take into immediate consideration the means of supplying, as far as they were competent, the want of the royal presence ; it was, therefore, incumbent upon them to insure a full attendance, in order to give every possible weight and solemnity to their proceedings : for this purpose it was ordered, that the house should be called over on Thursday the fourth of December, and that letters should be sent, requiring the attendance of every member : orders to the same effect were issued by the lords. On the day before the appointed meeting, the physicians who had attended his majesty were examined by the privy council, and the three following questions were proposed and answered : First, is his majesty's state of health such as to render him incapable of meeting parliament, or attending to public business ? the answer of all was, he certainly is incapable : the second question respected the probability of a cure, and the duration of the illness : they concurred in the probability of a cure, though they

they could not limit the time: the third question was, whether the physicians judged from general experience, the particular symptoms of his majesty's case, or both? the most frequent answer was, from general experience; but Doctor Willis, who entered more minutely on the subject, in his answers, than the other physicians, stated the circumstances which he deemed favourable to a speedy recovery. It was afterwards agreed by both houses, that the physicians should be examined by committees composed, as nearly as possible, of an equal number of members from both parties. It being ascertained that a temporary incapacity existed, Mr. Pitt, in order to pave the way for a supply, moved, that a committee should be appointed to examine the journals and report precedents from similar or analogous cases. Mr. Fox objected to a committee for such a purpose, as nugatory and productive of unnecessary delay: Mr. Pitt (he said) knew there was in the journals no precedent to be found of the suspension of executive government, where there was at the same time an heir apparent of full age and capacity: he himself was fully convinced, upon the maturest consideration of the principles and practice of the constitution, and of the analogy of the common law of the land, that whenever the sovereign, from sickness, infirmity, or other incapacity, was unable to exercise the functions of his high office, the heir apparent, being of full age and capacity, had as indisputable a claim to the exercise of the executive power, in the name and on behalf of the sovereign, during the continuance of such incapacity, as in case of his natural demise*:

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The houses meet to prepare for a supply. Mr. Pitt moves an inquiry into precedents.

Mr. Fox declares, that in such circumstances the heir apparent has a right to exercise the executive power.

* See Parliamentary Debates, Dec. 10. 1788.

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Mr. Pitt
contends
that the
right of
supplying
the defici-
ency is in
the people,
through
their repre-
sentatives.

the prince himself, from the peculiar delicacy of his situation, had not made the claim, but there was no doubt that it was his right to supply the place of his father. Mr. Pitt combated this doctrine, as totally inconsistent with actual history and the spirit of the constitution: there were, he admitted, no precedents applicable to this specific cause of incapacity; but whatever disability had at any time arisen in the executive branch, as the history of the country shewed, had been supplied by parliament. When the regular exercise of the powers of government was from any cause suspended, to whom could the right of providing a remedy for the existing defect devolve, but to the people, from whom all the powers of government originated? To assert an inherent right in the prince of Wales to assume the government, was virtually to revive those exploded ideas of the divine and indefeasible authority of princes, which had justly sunk into contempt, and almost into oblivion. Kings and princes derive their powers from the people, and to the people alone, through the organ of their representatives, did it appertain to decide in cases for which the constitution had made no specific or positive provision. On these grounds Mr. Pitt insisted that the prince had no more RIGHT to be appointed to supply the existing deficiency, than any other subject; though he admitted that, in the present case, *expediency* dictated that parliament should offer him the regency: substitution of another to execute the office of a king, during a temporary incapacity, was merely a measure of necessary policy: it was incumbent on legislature to entrust the authority to such person or persons, as it should deem most likely

likely to answer the purpose : after these observations the question being put, it was carried that a committee should be appointed to search for precedents.

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In the house of peers, lord Loughborough supported the position which Mr. Fox had advanced, and adduced great legal ingenuity and acuteness to prove, that the right ascribed to the prince was a corollary from the act of settlement, the general analogy of English law, the privileges and immunities peculiar to the prince, and belonging to no other subject. He admitted, however, that the exercise of this right ought not to commence until parliament had declared the sovereign's incapacity.

Lord
Loughbo-
rough, with
some di-
stinctions,
agrees with
Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox, at the next meeting of the commons, made an explanation of his meaning, agreeable to lord Loughborough's interpretation, and said, that his expressions on a former day had been misrepresented : his position, which he was still ready to maintain, was, that the houses of parliament had the right to adjudge the fact of incapacity, but on such adjudication the heir apparent had the right of holding the reins of government whilst the incapacity lasted : as, however, Mr. Pitt agreed with him, that in the present circumstances the prince was the person who ought to hold that office, it would be much more prudent to abstain from discussing so nice and subtle distinctions. Mr. Pitt replied, that he differed as much from Mr. Fox respecting the question of right, now that he had explained his meaning, as before such an explanation. Mr. Fox (he said) now asserted, that the prince of Wales had a right to exercise the royal authority, under the present circumstances of the country ; but that it was a right not in possession, until the prince

Mr. Fox
explains his
doctrine,
which Mr.
Pitt still
controverts.

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could exercise it on what he called the adjudication of parliament. He on his part denied that the prince of Wales possessed any right whatever, and upon that point Mr. Fox and he were still at issue. This was a very important question, and must be decided before they could proceed any farther; there might be differences of opinion whether any regency was necessary as yet, and a difference of opinion might arise, if necessary, what were the powers requisite to be granted to the regent? but nothing could be determined till the matter of right should be discussed. He not only challenged Mr. Fox to adduce either precedent or law to support his doctrine, but actually shewed from history that such a claim of right had been made, and had been resisted by parliament. In the reign of Henry VI. the duke of Gloucester, next heir to the crown *, claimed the regency during the minority of the king, and applied to parliament; the answer to this claim was, that he neither had by birth, nor by the will of his brother, any right whatever to the exercise of royal authority: they, however, appointed him regent, and entrusted him with the care of the young king. At the revolution, parliament proceeded on the same general principle; the king had ceased to act; to supply this deficiency, parliament acted as legislators: they did not restrict themselves to a simple address to the prince of Orange to accept the crown; they felt not only that they must have a king, but they must have a king on certain terms and conditions: they did what amounted to

* After the death of prince John of Lancaster duke of Bedford.

a legislative act: they came to a resolution to settle the crown, not on the prince of Orange and the heirs of his body, nor on the princess Mary and the heirs of her body, but on the prince and princess jointly. Here it was evident that, whatever the necessity of the case required at that time, the lords and commons possessed the power to provide for it, and consequently, whatever the necessity of the case demanded at present, the power belonged to the lords and commons to supply the deficiency. Parliament could have no possible interest in acting in any other way than as duty prompted and wisdom directed; and, as it was agreeable to history, reason, and expediency, that they should provide for a specific object, it became them, in making the provisions, to extend or contract the trust to be delegated according as they thought either necessary for its execution. Thus, according to Mr. Pitt, precedent confirmed the analogy of the constitution, and both concurred with the expediency which required that the peers and the representatives of the people should provide for supplying an unforeseen deficiency.

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Having grounded his doctrine on these arguments and facts, concerning the right which Mr. Fox had asserted to be vested in the heir apparent, Mr. Pitt proposed on the sixteenth of December three resolutions*: the first stating his majesty's present

The question brought to issue.

* The following are the resolutions: 1st, That it is the opinion of this committee, that his majesty is prevented, by his present indisposition, from coming to parliament, and from attending to public business; and that the personal ex-

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present unfitness for performing the functions of the kingly office: secondly, that the lords and commons had the right to provide for that case, and were in duty bound to make such provisions: thirdly, that the lords and commons should determine on the most effectual means of exercising their right, by vesting the powers and authority of the crown on behalf of the king during his majesty's illness. Several amendments were proposed; without detailing these, it is sufficient to mention that their object was to address the prince of Wales, heir apparent, and of mature age, beseeching him to take upon himself the administration of the civil and military government of the country, during the indisposition of his majesty, and no longer. The admission of this proposition would have precluded

exercise of the royal authority is thereby for the present interrupted: 2dly, That it is the opinion of this committee, that it is the right and duty of the lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, now assembled, and lawfully, fully and freely, representing all the estates of the public of this realm, to provide the means of supplying the defect of the personal exercise of the royal authority, arising from his majesty's said indisposition, in such manner as the exigency of the case may appear to require: Resolved, "That for the purpose, and for maintaining entire the constitutional authority of the king, it is necessary, that the said lords spiritual and temporal, and commons of Great Britain, should determine on the means whereby the royal assent may be given in Parliament to such bill as may be passed by the two houses of parliament, respecting the exercise of the powers and authorities of the crown, in the name, and on the behalf of the king, during the continuance of his majesty's present indisposition." See Parliamentary Reports, Dec. 1788.

every

every limitation of the kingly power, thus to be entrusted to a regent. Its supporters contended, that every part of the royal authority and prerogative was necessary for the discharge of kingly duties; if the regent were not entrusted with the whole power, he could not perform all the duties. By its opponents it was answered, that the situation for which they were called to provide was, from the concurrent testimony of the most competent witnesses, only temporary; the supply wanted, therefore, was also temporary. Various parts of the royal establishment belonged to the splendor and dignity of the crown, more than to its power or its executive functions. So much authority as was necessary to enable the regent to act as executive magistrate, during the illness of the sovereign, should be conferred, but no more. The bounds and circumscriptions necessary upon this principle would be matter of cautious consideration to parliament, according to all the circumstances of the case. Such restrictions would be impossible if the present amendment were adopted. Parliament was to reflect on the present as a general question that would be a guide to future ages: they were to form measures for insuring the restitution of his power to the principal, when a substitute was no longer necessary; and in making this provision they were to consider men as men are generally found. Cases might arise, in which, if an heir obtained possession, he might be unwilling to return to expectancy; or, though an heir were ever so dutifully disposed himself, he might be misled by evil counsellors. No character could be more meritorious or more worthy of confidence than

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the present prince of Wales. Constitutional policy, however, proceeds not upon individual merits, but on general expediency. Every part of the principal authority was not wanted to the efficiency of the substitute. Why should they confer on a delegate any more power than was necessary to answer the purposes of the delegation? Our sovereign possessed as much power as was consistent with a free government, and no more; the regent was, by the scheme of ministers, to possess as much as was consistent with the object of his temporary office, and no more; there was no disrespect offered to the regent by a circumscription applying to the particular circumstances, as there was no disrespect to our kings in the circumscriptions affixed to their authority by the constitution. In both cases the principle was the same: princes are men, and fallible like other human beings; let them be invested with all the authority which is conducive to the public welfare, and restrained from that which might be prejudicial. Mr. Pitt informed the house, that he intended, if the resolutions should be adopted by the commons, and also meet the concurrence of the lords, to propose, that the lord high chancellor should be empowered to put the great seal to a commission for opening the parliament in the usual form; and that as soon as a bill should be passed by both houses for providing for the exercise of the royal authority, under certain limitations, during his majesty's indisposition, another commission should be sealed for giving to such act the royal assent. This project was very strenuously opposed: first, as unnecessary; because, all parties concurring

concurring unanimously in opinion that the prince of Wales should be invested with the regency, the procedure by address or declaration was the most simple, and the most consonant to the practice and constitutional functions of the two houses: the measure was unwarrantable; in fact it altered an essential part of the state; it made the two houses **KINGS**. To fix the form of a legal sanction on their proceedings, they were to give fictitiously a royal assent, but in reality their own assent to their own acts. If the houses assumed to themselves powers which belonged to the legislature, and proceeded to legislate, they would act in direct violation of the spirit of the constitution; even to a positive act of parliament, the 13th of Charles II, which expressly declared, that the two houses could not make laws without the king: after a long debate the resolutions were voted. Having passed the house of commons, they were introduced to the lords by the chancellor, and similar amendments were proposed. In the debate which ensued on that occasion, the question of right was resumed; an active part was taken by their royal highnesses the princes, and particularly by his majesty's second son, Frederic duke of York.

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Determined
that the
supply of
the defi-
ciency rests
with the
houses of
parliament.

This illustrious youth received the first part of his education in his native country. Destined for the military profession he was afterwards sent to Germany, and spent several years in his own bishopric at Osnabrug, and his royal father's electoral dominions: thence he repaired to the court of Berlin, and completed his military education under the system which the Prussian hero had established.

Frederic
duke of
York op-
poses admi-
nistration.

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established. Eminently distinguished for manly beauty and graces, in natural endowments, and acquired qualifications, he was one of the most accomplished princes of the age: having the strongest fraternal affection for his elder brother, between whom and him the closest intimacy from their childhood had enhanced the sentiments of relation, on coming back to England he chiefly associated with the prince of Wales, and becoming acquainted with the companions of that exalted personage, he a considerable degree adopted their political opinions. "No claim (said his highness) has been made by my royal brother; I am confident the prince too well understands the sacred principles which seated the house of Brunswick on the throne of Great Britain, ever to assume or exercise any power not derived from the will of the people, expressed by their representatives, and your lordships in parliament. On this ground, I hope, the house will avoid pressing a decision which certainly was not necessary to the great object expected from parliament, and which must be most painful in the discussion to a family already sufficiently agitated and afflicted: these (continued his highness) are the sentiments of an honest heart, equally influenced by duty and affection to my royal father, and by attachment to the constitutional rights of his subjects; and I am confident, that if my royal brother were to address you in his place, as a peer of the realm, these are the sentiments which he would distinctly avow." Though the peers warmly approved of the general sentiments expressed by his highness, and of the dignified manner in which they

they were delivered, yet the majority thought it necessary, since the question of right had once been started, to have it fully discussed; and the resolutions were carried by a considerable majority. A strong protest was entered against agreeing to these resolutions, and signed by the dukes of York and Cumberland, and forty-six other peers*. These proceedings of the house occupied the greater part of December. On the twenty-ninth of the month Mr. Cornwall, speaker of the house of commons, was seized with a dreadful illness, which, four days after, the second of January 1789, ended in his death. The house meeting on the fifth, Mr. William Grenville was proposed by the friends of ministers as his successor, and sir Gilbert Elliot by opposition: the election was carried in favour of the former by a majority of two hundred and fifteen to one hundred and forty-four.

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Mr. Cornwall dying,
Mr. Grenville is
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The preliminary subjects having been discussed by both houses, Mr. Pitt, before he explained his plan of regency to parliament, submitted its outlines to the prince in a letter, wherein he offered either to attend his highness, should any farther explanation be required, or to convey such explanation in any other mode which the prince should signify to be most agreeable. This letter, sent on the thirtieth of December, stated the plan to be that which, according to the best judgment which they were able to form, his majesty's confidential servants had conceived proper to be proposed in the present circumstances: the outlines were, that his highness should be empowered to exercise the royal autho-

Mr. Pitt's
plan of re-
gency is
submitted
to the prince
of Wales.

* See their names, State Papers, Dec. 29, 1788.

rity,

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rity, in the name and on the behalf of his majesty, during his majesty's illness, and to do all acts which might legally be done by his majesty. The care of his majesty's person, the management of the household, and the direction and appointment of the officers and servants therein should be in the queen, under such regulations as might be thought necessary. The power to be exercised by his highness should not extend to the disposal of either real or personal property of the king (except in the renewal of leases), to the bestowal of any pension, the reversion of any office, or any appointment whatever, but during his majesty's pleasure, except those granted by law for life; that his highness should not be empowered to confer the dignity of the peerage on any person except his majesty's issue who had attained the age of twenty-one years. This plan, the letter declared, was formed on the supposition, that his majesty's illness was only temporary, and would be of no long duration. It would be difficult to fix beforehand the precise period for which these provisions ought to last; but should his majesty's recovery be protracted to a more distant period than there was then reason to expect, the consideration of the plan, according to the exigency of the case, would be open to the wisdom of parliament*.

His highness expresses his disapprobation and reasons, but deems it incumbent on him to accept the office.

On the first of January an answer was delivered by his royal highness to the lord chancellor to be conveyed to Mr. Pitt. Respecting the measures already embraced by parliament, his highness declared he would observe a total silence: no act of

* See State Papers, Dec. 30, 1788.

the lords and commons could be a proper subject of his animadversion : but (he said) when, previously to any discussion in parliament, the outlines of a scheme of government are sent for his consideration, in which it is proposed that he shall be personally and principally concerned, and by which the royal authority and the public welfare may be deeply affected, the prince would be unjustifiable were he to withhold an explicit declaration of his sentiments : his silence might be construed into a previous approbation of a plan, the accomplishment of which, every motive of duty to his father and sovereign, as well as of regard for the public interest, obliges him to consider as injurious to both. The scheme communicated by Mr. Pitt, is a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity, in every branch of the administration of affairs : a project for dividing the royal family from each other ; for separating the court from the state ; and therefore, by disjoining government from its natural and accustomed support, a scheme for disconnecting the authority to command service, from the power of animating it by reward ; and for allotting to the prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of softening them to the public by any one act of grace, favour or benignity. These positions the prince adduced detailed arguments to support : the plan (he proceeded) was not founded on any general principle, but was calculated to infuse groundless jealousies and suspicions in that quarter, whose confidence it should ever be the first pride of his life to merit and obtain. With regard to the object of the limitations, his majesty's

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ministers had afforded him no light; they had informed him *what* powers they meant to refuse him, but not *why* they were to be withheld: he deemed it a fundamental principle of this constitution, that the powers and prerogatives of the crown are vested there, as a trust for the benefit of the people; and that they are sacred only as they are necessary to the preservation of that poise and balance of the constitution, which experience has proved to be the true security of the liberty of the subject: but the plea of public utility ought to be strong, manifest, and urgent, which calls for the extinction or suspension of any one of those essential rights in the supreme power or its representative. If security were wanted, that his majesty should re-possess his rightful government whenever it pleased Providence to remove his present calamity, the prince would be the first to urge the adoption of measures conducive to that purpose, as the preliminary and paramount consideration of any settlement in which he would consent to share: if attention to what his majesty's feelings and wishes might be on the happy day of his recovery were the object, the prince expressed his firm conviction, that no event would be more repugnant to the feelings of his royal father, than the knowledge, that the government of his son and representative had exhibited the sovereign power of the realm in a state of degradation, curtailed authority and diminished energy; a state hurtful in practice to the prosperity and good government of his people, and injurious in its precedent to the security of the monarch, and the right of his family. The provision respecting the king's property

property was totally unnecessary, as that was perfectly secured, during his majesty's life, by the law of the land. The prince having discharged, as he conceived, his indispensable duty in giving his free opinion on the plan submitted to his consideration, concluded with declaring, in the following terms, his reasons for accepting, notwithstanding the objections he had enumerated, the proffered trust: His * conviction of the evils which may arise to the king's interests, to the peace and happiness of the royal family, and to the safety and welfare of the nation, from the government of the country remaining longer in its present maimed and debilitated state, outweighs, in the prince's mind, every other consideration, and will determine him to undertake the painful trust imposed upon him by the present melancholy necessity (which of all the king's subjects he deplores the most), in full confidence, that the affection and loyalty to the king, the experienced attachment to the house of Brunswick, and the generosity which has always distinguished this nation, will carry him through the many difficulties inseparable from this critical situation, with comfort to himself, with honour to the king, and with advantage to the public.

Such was the substance of the letter written by the heir apparent on this momentous subject, and though great numbers did not assent to his highness's conclusions, concerning the inexpediency of the proposed restrictions, yet every judge of com-

* The letter is written in the third person. See State Papers, Jan. 1, 1789.

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Second ex-
amination of
the phyfi-
cians.

position and argument allowed that it was a very masterly performance.

On the sixth of January, when Mr. Pitt was about to propose his plan of regency to the house of commons, Mr. Loveden, member for Abingdon, moved, that, as the intended limitations would have a reference to the state of his majesty's health, and several weeks had elapsed since that had been ascertained, the physicians should be again examined. After a very warm debate, including a considerable share of personal altercation, it was agreed that a new committee should be appointed, and that the physicians should be interrogated. The result of the examination was, that his majesty's recovery continued probable. The proceedings of the committee having occupied about a week, the report was brought up on Tuesday the thirteenth of January, and appointed to be taken into consideration the following Friday. On the sixteenth Mr. Pitt opened his plan to the house: the subject (he said) divided itself into three distinct heads: first, the nature of the king's illness: secondly, the principles upon which the two houses were authorized to act on this occasion: and thirdly, the application of those principles to the measures which he should propose, of remedying the present defect in the personal exercise of the royal authority. From the recent examination, they were confirmed in the conclusions drawn from the former, that his majesty was by his illness rendered incapable of attending to the business of his station; but that it was probable he might recover, and once more be able

Mr. Pitt's
plan of re-
gency is
laid before
parliament.

able to resume the reins of government. In these two points all the physicians were agreed; they were not all equally sanguine in their hopes of his majesty's recovery: it was, however, extremely satisfactory, that the expectations of the several physicians were respectively favourable, in proportion to their knowledge of that particular distemper and that individual case: the deficiency for which they were called to provide was temporary, and would probably be short. The principles by which the houses were to proceed, arose from the nature and probable duration of the deficiency; they were to provide for the present necessity only, and to do no more than it required; they were also to guard against any embarrassment in the resumption of the royal authority, and therefore to grant such powers only as were requisite for the government of the country with energy and effect. On these principles he had framed his plan, of which the outlines were exhibited in his letter to the prince of Wales. The regent was to exercise the whole royal authority, subject to restrictions which were intended not to interfere with executive efficiency. The limitations were reducible to four heads: first, that the power of his highness should not extend to the bestowal of the peerage, except to his majesty's issue that had attained twenty-one years of age. To prove the propriety of this limitation, Mr. Pitt adduced three grounds upon which this prerogative was entrusted by the constitution to the crown: first, it was designed to enable the king to counteract the designs of any factious cabal in the house of lords: secondly, to enable the sovereign to reward

Principle; that the power should answer without exceeding the purposes of the trust.

Details and restrictions.

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for

eminent merit: thirdly, this power was designed to provide for the fluctuations of wealth and property in the country; by raising men of great landed interest to the peerage, that branch of the legislature would be always placed upon its true and proper basis: for none of these objects was this prerogative wanted in the present case; there was no probability that any such cabal should now be formed to obstruct the government of his royal highness: on the other hand, if this power were conferred on the regent, such a number of peers might be created, as would greatly embarrass the government of his majesty on his restoration to health: as a reward of merit, or a nobilitation of property, the suspension of this prerogative, during the *temporary* incapacity which they were supplying, could be attended with no material inconvenience: should the unfitness prove more permanent than they expected, parliament could extend the regent's power as far as might be then deemed necessary for the public welfare. On the same principle was founded the second restriction, by which the regent was not empowered to grant any pension or place for life, or in reversion, except such offices as are by law held for life, or during good behaviour: the powers restrained were not necessary to the executive government, temporarily to be held by the regent; and their exercise might be injurious to the government of his majesty on his recovery. The third restriction, respecting the king's personal property, he scarcely thought necessary; but as they were acting on parliamentary principles, and endeavouring to make their provisions as comprehensive as possible,

possible, he accounted it is duty to make this regulation a part of his plan. The fourth resolution was intended to entrust the sovereign's person, during his illness, to the guardianship of the queen: he proposed to put the whole of his majesty's household under her authority, investing her with all powers to dismiss and appoint as she should think proper: unless she held this control, the queen could not discharge the important trust committed to her care: a council should be named to assist the queen with advice, but without any power of control: trustees should be appointed to manage the real and personal estate of the king, but should have no power of disposing any part of it, except by lease. The propositions were very strenuously supported, both upon the arguments which the minister himself adduced, and on others. The law-officers maintained, as a fundamental doctrine, that the king's political character was, in the eye of the law, inseparable from his personal; that it remained entire and perfect, and would continue so to do until his natural demise; and to this principle frequent reference was made in the course of the debates. The senator who vindicated the plan of Mr. Pitt, in the most extensive details, elaborate research, and accurate induction, was Mr. Grenville, the new speaker: in the committee this member took an opportunity of delivering his opinion; and for near three hours both occupied and engaged the attention of the house. His oration on the subject stated every historical fact, explained and enforced all the arguments of precedent, law, and constitutional analogy, by which the proceedings of the ministers

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Mr. Gren-
ville.

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and against.

were justified; and also endeavoured to combat each and all objections which they encountered. From the constitutional history of the country he attempted to demonstrate, that the principle on which our ancestors both conferred and bounded the powers of a regent were the same that were now applied. It was proposed on the one hand to establish a form of government capable of conducting the public business; and on the other, to provide complete and ample security to enable the sovereign to resume the exercise of his authority, fully, freely, and without embarrassment, when the existing deficiency should terminate. Keeping this principle uniformly in view, he applied it to the various restrictions, and contended, that the extent and of the delegation was sufficient for the energetic useful execution of the trust, and that the bounds were necessary to the security of resumption. The propositions were opposed on the following grounds: they tended, it was affirmed, to debilitate and humble the executive government, by stripping it of its legal prerogatives: the power of bestowing peerages was an integral part of the royal authority, a shield that, from its earliest days, the constitution had provided for its own defence and preservation; and which could not be wrested from the crown without bringing destruction on our polity. Mr. Fox, with his wonted energy, impugned the doctrine of the law officers, concerning the inseparability of the king's personal and political character: he wished (he said) to hear this doctrine explained; for how that person, whose political faculties were confessedly suspended by a severe visitation of Providence,

vidence,

vidence, could still exist in the full enjoyment of his political character, was beyond his understanding to comprehend: the doctrine seemed, indeed, to be founded on those blind and superstitious notions, by which, as they all knew from history, human institutions had been, as it were, deified; and which were inculcated for the purpose of impressing a strong and implicit reverence of authority in the minds of the multitude: while the supporters of this doctrine took up the superstitions of antiquity, they rejected their morality; they enveloped the sacred person of the king with a political veil, which was calculated to inspire awe and secure obedience; but laboured to enfeeble the arms of government, to cripple it in all its great and essential parts, to expose it to hostile attack and to contumely; to take from it the dignity which appertained to itself, and the use for which it was designed towards the people. He reprobated with peculiar severity the restrictions which were proposed on the creation of peers: Mr. Pitt had conferred that rank upon no less than forty-two persons during the five years that he had been in office; and he had not the pretext of saying that any cabal was formed to thwart his measures in the house of lords, which made such a promotion necessary; and if such were the means to which he had been obliged to resort, surrounded with all the power and influence of the crown, what must be the condition of those who should have to contend, in the crippled state to which they would be reduced, against an opposition armed with so large a portion of the usual patronage of government. He expressed his indignation

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tion and abhorrence of a project that placed in a state of competition persons so nearly connected by blood, by duty, and by affection, and thereby excited that mutual jealousy which, in some degree, is inseparable from the human mind: how much (he said) had they to answer for, who, with a perfect knowledge of this weakness of human nature, wickedly and wantonly pursued a measure which might involve the empire in endless distractions. To these objections ministers replied, that though the prerogatives proposed to be withheld from the regent were necessary for the sovereign, they were not indispensably requisite to a temporary substitute: the regent was to possess the supreme direction of the ordnance, army, and navy; the power of making war, peace, and alliances; the choice of his ministers, and all subordinate officers; the appointment of bishops and judges: such authority was sufficient for a temporary exercise of the executive functions, though restrained from promotions and donations; the influence of which, lasting after the trust had terminated, might have disturbed the government of the rightful holder. These were the grounds on which Mr. Pitt, his co-adjutors and supporters, replied to the objections of the other party, on the restriction concerning peerages. The resolution, vesting in the queen, instead of the regent, the appointment and direction of the household officers, was opposed upon more special grounds: it withheld a power from a responsible, to confer it on an irresponsible person; tended to establish in the empire a fourth estate, against which Mr. Pitt had exerted himself so successfully a few years before;

fore; and was calculated to excite discord between the members of the royal family. If the nomination of attendants were withheld from the regent because it was dangerous to trust him with such appointments, the remedy was inadequate to the disease; for the army and navy could not be very harmless engines in the hands of a man, to whom it would not be safe to trust the nomination of lords and grooms of the bed-chamber*. Ministerial speakers replied, that it was unanimously agreed the royal person should be entrusted to her majesty; the disposal of the household was necessary for her execution of that trust: besides, the officers in question, though a proper and becoming part of the state and splendor of a monarch reigning over

* Lord North, declining in years, and afflicted with blindness, took a very active share in opposing the plan of regency, and fully shewed, that the appropriate excellencies of his eloquence, ingenuity of argument, promptness of reply, and brilliancy of wit, were still undiminished. Expatiating upon the arguments stated in the text, the minister (he said) strains at a gnat, but swallows a camel: he is not afraid to delegate the great functions of the executive power, but he startles at the small: take the patronage, take the disposal of the civil, political, and military appointments, but keep away from the court: command the navy and army, but abstain from the household troops: let the houses of parliament become executive, as well as legislative; break down the barrier of the constitution, cripple the sovereign power: all this you may do, but touch not the pages, grooms of the stole, gentlemen ushers, or lords of the bedchamber. This, said his lordship, reminds me of the stories with which my old nurse used to entertain me about the achievements of witches; they could ride through the air, agitate the elements, raise the wind, bring rain, lightning, and thunder; all this they would do without flinching, but if they came to a *straw*, there they boggled, stumbled, and could proceed no farther.

a great and opulent people, were not necessary to the energy of the executive government during its temporary delegation: on these grounds the resolutions were supported and opposed in both houses: they were at last carried; and it was voted, that the prince and queen should be informed of the measures of legislation. On the thirtieth of January the resolutions were presented to these illustrious personages by a committee of peers and commoners. The answer of his highness was similar in substance to the concluding parts of his letter to Mr. Pitt, which are already embodied in this narrative. Her majesty's answer was to the following effect: "My lords and gentlemen, my duty and gratitude to the king, and the sense I must ever entertain of my great obligations to this country, will certainly engage my most earnest attention to the anxious and momentous trust intended to be reposed in me by parliament. It will be a great consolation to me to receive the aid of a council, of which I shall stand so much in need, in the discharge of a duty wherein the happiness of my future life is indeed deeply interested, but which a higher object, the happiness of a great, loyal, and affectionate people, renders still more important." The answers being communicated to the houses, it was moved in the house of lords, that letters patent should be issued under the great seal, empowering certain commissioners to open and hold the king's parliaments at Westminster*. The arguments already adduced on this subject, by both parties, were frequently repeated; and the names of the proposed commissioners were read,

* See Parliamentary Reports.

and at their head were the prince of Wales, the duke of York, the dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland. The duke of York, rising, said he had not been informed that it was intended to insert his name in the commission; he, therefore, had not been able to take steps to prevent the nomination: not wishing to stand upon record, and to be handed to posterity as approving such a measure, he could not sanction the proceedings with his name: his opinion of the whole system adopted was already known: he deemed the proposition, as well as every other that had been embraced respecting the same object, to be unconstitutional and illegal: he desired, therefore, to have no concern with any part of the business; and requested that his name, and the name of his brother the prince of Wales, might be left out of the commission: the duke of Cumberland desired his own name and the duke of Gloucester's might also be omitted: accordingly the princes were left out of the nomination. The resolution being carried, was on the second of February adopted by the commons; the following day the houses assembled as a regular parliament, and, the lord chancellor being indisposed, earl Bathurst, president of the council, opened the causes of the present meeting, and the objects for which they were to provide. On the sixth of February Mr. Pitt introduced his regency bill, founded on the principles already investigated, and the resolutions already voted. Its various clauses and provisions having undergone in detail much opposition, it was passed on the twelfth of February, carried

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the blood all
vote on the
side of op-
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of the king.

carried to the house of lords, and read a second time without opposition.

Her majesty, knowing the anxious concern that his subjects felt for their beloved sovereign, with the most considerate goodness gratified them by sending to St. James's daily accounts of the state of his health, as ascertained by the opinion of his physicians. For some days these reports announced that his majesty's illness had begun to take a very favourable turn, and aroused all ranks of his subjects with the most pleasing and sanguine expectations. On Thursday the ninth of February the lord chancellor, as soon as the peers assembled in order to go into a committee on the regency bill, informed them, that the improvement of the king's health, already stated in the official reports of the physicians, was still progressive; an intelligence which certainly must prove pleasing to every man in the kingdom: in this situation of things he conceived they could not possibly proceed upon the bill before them; and therefore moved, that their lordships do immediately adjourn to Tuesday next the twenty-fourth. On the day appointed the chancellor informed the house, that he had that morning attended his majesty by his own command, and found him perfectly recovered; he therefore moved a farther adjournment, which being again repeated, his lordship on the fifth of March informed the peers, that his majesty would signify his farther pleasure to both houses on Tuesday the tenth of March: and thus ended the necessity and project of a regency.

The

The plan of regency received the warmest praises and severest censures from the supporters of the respective parties throughout the kingdom. By the one, Mr. Pitt was represented as having again saved the country from the domination of an ambitious faction, which, if restored to power, might not have been easily displaced; that the prince, intelligent and well disposed as he was himself, was so much guided by these counsellors as to excite apprehension, lest at their instigation he might act differently from what his own mind would prompt and dictate. By the other it was alleged, that Mr. Pitt's object was to restrict the regent so much, as to render it necessary for him to come to some terms of accommodation with those who should oppose his present favourites; that his purpose simply was, by retaining a considerable portion of the kingly influence in hands favourable to his measures, to secure the means of re-establishing in office himself and his friends; that the restraints designed for the prince were inconsistent with the energetic exercise of the executorial functions; that they were justifiable on no general principle, as every part of the kingly prerogative was necessary for its constitutional purposes; that they implied an injurious doubt and suspicion concerning the character and probable conduct of the prince; and were personally and individually insulting as well as unjust to his highness.

Impartial observers, probably, will neither altogether agree in the panegyric nor the reproach. From history, as well as the general principles of the constitution, it appears that it belongs to parliament,

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Warm
praises and
severe cen-
sures of the
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liament, as representatives of the people, to provide for any exigency which was not foreseen or described by the law of the land; that parliament has exercised this power, and that its exertions have been beneficial. Mr. Fox's first position was a theory which neither experience nor analogy supported: his explanatory doctrine, declaring the prince's right, on a parliamentary adjudication of the case, equally wanted the support of experience or analogy. Concerning the competency to provide a remedy in the existing exigency, the opinion of Mr. Pitt seems to rest on more logical and conclusive reasoning than the opinion of Mr. Fox: but as it was evidently expedient that the heir apparent should be the regent, the power to be conferred ought to be as much as was necessary for answering the purposes of the appointment: he was for the time to supply the want of the kingly office. It is difficult to conceive that the acting chief magistrate could perform the official functions necessary for the good of the country, without the full prerogative, unless by a supposition totally inconsistent with the constitution, that the crown possessed prerogatives not necessary for the good of the subject. That any difficulty could arise in the resumption of his office by the rightful holder, when it should please Heaven to restore his health, was an hypothesis containing an union of many and great improbabilities: that the heir apparent should desire to obstruct the resumption, could only be apprehended on a supposition that the prince was totally deficient of filial duty, loyalty, and patriotism; in short, in every virtue becoming his station: such

such a notion had evidently no foundation in his conduct; that, intending well himself, he might by his advisers be misled to so great a degree, would be impossible, unless on a supposition that he himself was totally deficient in point of judgment and common intelligence, which was well known to be quite contrary to the truth. Reviewers of the conduct of the party which he countenanced, though they might disapprove of many of their acts and measures, could find nothing in the history or character of lord Loughborough, the duke of Portland, lord North, and Mr. Fox, that could render it likely that they would counsel such an obstruction: but if the prince and these illustrious supporters should propose or attempt such measures, how were they to be put into execution? were the legislature and the nation to join in the scheme? without their concurrence, such a disloyal and undutiful attempt would be impracticable, and would discover infatuated folly as well as desperate wickedness in its authors. Vigilant caution to guard against such improbable dangers would be a superfluous and idle exercise of deliberative policy. In fact, from Mr. Pitt's scheme it is evident that no such fears were seriously entertained: the most efficient engine of power, the command of the national force, was to be put into the regent's hands. The chief object of restriction was the bestowal of titles, the distribution of donative, either in pensions or appointments equivalent to pensions: the subtraction of these measures of influence from the intended regent, it was morally certain, in the circumstances of the case, would be an accession of influence

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influence to the proposer of the restrictions: un-
biaſſed examination, therefore, without questioning
Mr. Pitt's *motives* to have been pure, loyal, and
patriotic, in his project of regency, cannot avoid
perceiving that the manifest *tendency* of his restrict-
ive clauses was to ſecure conſiderable influence to
his own party: ſuch an opinion is certainly no im-
putation on the character of a ſtateſman; it merely
ſuppoſes that he was a lover of power, and prefer-
red an adminiſtration compoſed of his political
friends, to an adminiſtration compoſed of his poli-
tical adverſaries. But whatever may be the opinion
formed of the reſtrictions deſigned to be impoſed on
the prince regent, we may ſafely conclude, that the
principle of miniſters, reſpecting the right of ſup-
plying a deficiency in the executive government,
was the moſt agreeable to the hiſtory and ſpirit of
the conſtitution.

The Irish
parliament
addreſſes the
prince to
aſſume the
regency of
Ireland.

The Irish parliament on this occaſion exerciſed
that independent political power which it had ſo
recently aſcertained, and adopted a plan totally op-
poſite to the project of the Britiſh ſenate, and ſimilar
to that which had been in England propoſed by Mr.
Fox. A motion, ſupported by Mr. Grattan, and
oppoſed by Mr. Fitzgibbon, with other eminent
ſpeakers, was carried without a diviſion, for preſent-
ing an addreſs to the prince of Wales, requeſting
him to take on himſelf the government of Ireland
during his majeſty's incapacity. A ſimilar addreſs
was voted in the houſe of peers; and on the nine-
teenth of February, both lords and commons wait-
ed on the lord lieutenant with their addreſs, and
requeſted him to tranſmit the ſame, his excel-

lency returned for answer, that, under the impressions he felt of his official duty, and of the oath he had taken, he did not consider himself warranted to lay before the prince an address, purporting to invest his royal highness with powers to take upon him the government of that realm, before he should be enabled by law so to do, and therefore was obliged to decline transmitting their address to Great Britain. After the answer was discussed in parliament, it was resolved that, his excellency the lord lieutenant having thought proper to decline to transmit to his royal highness George prince of Wales the address of both houses of parliament, a competent number of members should be appointed to present the said address to his royal highness: the resolution was carried in both houses: the duke of Leinster and earl Charlemont were appointed commissioners on the part of the peers; the right honourable Thomas Conolly, right honourable J. O'Neil, the right honourable W. B. Ponsonby, and J. Stuart, esqrs. were appointed commissioners on the part of the commons. These gentlemen soon after departed for England, but the auspicious recovery of our king rendered their purpose unnecessary.

On the tenth of March, the commons having attended at the bar of the house of lords, the chancellor informed them that his majesty, not thinking fit to be then present in his royal person, had caused a commission to be issued, authorizing the commissioners, who had been appointed by former letters patent, to hold the parliament, to open and declare certain farther causes for holding the

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the same. The commission being read, the chancellor addressing the houses in the name of the commissioners, acquainted them that his majesty, being recovered from his late severe indisposition, and enabled to attend the public affairs of his kingdom, had commanded him to convey his warmest acknowledgements for the additional proofs which they had given of their affectionate attachment to his person, and of their zealous concern for the honour and interests of his crown, and the security and good government of his dominions. Since the close of the last session, the king had concluded a defensive alliance with Prussia, copies of which would be laid before the house: his majesty's endeavours were employed, during the last summer, in conjunction with his allies, in order to prevent, as much as possible, the extension of hostilities in the north; and to manifest his desire of effecting a general pacification, no opportunity would be neglected on his part to promote this salutary object; and, in the mean time, he had the satisfaction of receiving from all foreign courts continued assurances of their friendly disposition towards this country. Addresses of congratulation and thanks were moved in both houses, and unanimously voted: an address to the queen was also proposed, and carried with the same unanimity.

Joy diffused
through the
nation on
the recovery
of their be-
loved mo-
narch.

So great was the joy which diffused itself through the metropolis and the nation, that for several days scarcely any thing was attended to, but expressions of delight for the recovery of their sovereign. Conscious as his subjects were of their affection and veneration for their king, they had never known
how

dearly they loved his goodness, how highly they prized his virtues, until grief for his calamity, and the dread of its consequences, disclosed to them the poignancy of their feelings. Confident as our king was of being beloved and valued by his subjects, yet occasion had not fully manifested to him the force, extent, and intenseness of their affections, until they had exhibited themselves in universal delight that he was, as it were, risen to them from the dead. Perhaps the annals of history do not record a more sincere, tender and general concern of subjects in the welfare of a sovereign, than displayed themselves in the affliction, gloom, and despondency of Britons, when his majesty's illness was known, and before the probability of recovery was declared, the anxious and eager hopes that sprang from the opinions of the physician most conversant in such maladies; and the ardent expectation that arose from the reports of beginning convalescence; these sentiments increasing with the augmented probability of approaching recovery, until the completion of the cure turned hope and expectation into the strongest joy. Nor were external testimonies wanting to correspond with the gladdened feelings of the people: all ranks and all individuals vied with each other in rejoicings; invention was roused to devise emblems expressive of the general sympathy; and taste was employed in superadding grace and decoration to the efforts of genius which were employed to promote and heighten the prevalent passion. Illuminations received a new character, and, in addition to former mechanism, exhibited fancy, ingenuity, and design. It was not a

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His ma-
jesty goes to
St. Paul's
to return
thanks.

mere blaze of light, but in many places light exhibiting a happy resemblance of the painter and sculpture's skill, and in some even of the poet's art.

His majesty was desirous of publicly testifying his gratitude to the Supreme Being for the late signal interposition of his benignant providence in removing the illness with which he had been afflicted: with this view he appointed a thanksgiving, and resolved for the greater solemnity to go to St. Paul's cathedral, there to return thanks to almighty God for his merciful goodness: the twenty-third of April was the day fixed for the purpose; and a more splendid exhibition has rarely met the public eye. The procession began with the commons, as representatives of the people of Britain; at eight o'clock the members set off in their carriages, followed by their speaker in his state-coach; preceded by the masters in chancery and judges, next came the peers, the younger baron first, and the lord chancellor in his state coach closing this part of the procession: afterwards came the princes, escorted by parties of horse-guards. Their majesties set out from the queen's palace soon after ten o'clock, in a coach drawn by eight cream-coloured horses, followed by their royal highnesses the princesses, and proceeded along Pall Mall, and through the Strand, amid the loyal acclamations of a prodigious concourse of people. At Temple-bar his majesty was met by the lord mayor in a gown of crimson velvet, by the sheriffs in their scarlet robes, and a deputation from the aldermen and common councilmen, (being all on horseback,) when

when the lord mayor surrendered the city sword to the king, who having returned it to him, he carried it bare-headed before the monarch to St. Paul's. His majesty, being come to St. Paul's, was met at the west door by the peers, the bishop of London, the dean of St. Paul's (bishop of Lincoln), and the canons residentiary. The sword of state was carried before his majesty by the marquis of Stafford into the choir, when the king and queen placed themselves under a canopy of state, near the west end, opposite the altar. The peers had their seats in the area, as a house of lords; and the commons in the stalls. Divine service* being finished, the procession returned in the same order: the whole spectacle was extremely magnificent, and, viewed in combination with its objects and cause, was admirably calculated to strike every beholder of feeling and reflection with mingled joy, gratitude, and piety.

Very splendid galas were given by many individuals on the auspicious occasion: the most sumptuous

Festive rejoicings.

* The prayers and litany were read and chanted by the minor canons: the Te Deum and anthems, composed for the occasion, were sung by the choir, who were placed in the organ loft, and were joined in the chorus, as also in the psalms, by the charity children, in number about six thousand, who were assembled there, previous to his majesty's arrival: the communion service was read by the dean and residentiaries, and the sermon preached by the lord bishop of London, from Psalm xxvii. 16.—“O, tarry thou the Lord's leisure; be strong, and he shall comfort thine heart; and put thou thy trust in the Lord.” See Annual Register, 1789. Appendix to Chronicle, p. 249.

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tuous and magnificent was exhibited by the princess royal at Windsor; the whole disposition of the entertainment, but especially the emblematical figures, did great honour to the taste and ingenuity of its lovely and accomplished author; dresses, of which the principal characteristic was UNIFORMITY, exhibiting gracefulness and loyalty, with a beautiful VARIETY of finely fancied ornaments, exemplified Hutchinson's doctrine on the constituents of beauty.

The French and Spanish ambassadors also gave entertainments on the same auspicious occasion; that which was exhibited by the former, both in magnificence and splendor, in beauty of decoration * and ingenuity of device, approached nearest to the princess's gala.

Parliamentary proceedings.

Private and public congratulations occupied, without interruption, the first week after the re-establishment of our sovereign's health was announced; and it was the middle of the second before parliamentary business was resumed. On the eighteenth of March a plan, formed by the master-general of the ordnance, for fortifying the West India islands, was submitted to the house of com-

* This entertainment was given in a very large and magnificent house, which the ambassador occupied in Portman-square. Among the devices was the following: on each side of the grand saloon was a transparent painting; that on the right of her majesty representing the genius of France congratulating the genius of England on the recovery of the king, an excellent likeness of whom the goddess of health held in her hand.

mons;

mons; and after undergoing considerable discussion, on the same grounds as that of the former year, was adopted. A tax imposed upon shops some years before, at the instance of Mr. Pitt, and assessing them in proportion to the rent of the dwelling-house of which they made a part, had been found to fall heavily on the metropolis and other great commercial towns, where the rents of houses are necessarily high. It had been intended by legislature, that the tax should fall ultimately upon the customers; but shopkeepers alleged this object to be impracticable: they represented it as partial and oppressive, and Mr. Fox had repeatedly on these grounds applied for a repeal. This year he renewed his motion, and the house, without admitting the grievance to the alleged extent, yet wishing to satisfy so numerous and useful a body, consented to adopt the motion; and a bill for the purpose was introduced, and passed both houses unanimously.

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On the eighth of May Mr. Beaufoy again moved for the repeal of the test and corporation act, which he supported by the same arguments that he had used two years before; and was also opposed on grounds that had been formerly employed; and his motion was rejected by a majority of one hundred and twenty-two to one hundred and two. One of the principal objections to the desired repeal was, that certain classes of dissenters not only maintained principles contrary to the fundamental tenets of our faith, but declared intentions inimical to our establishment: there were other bodies of dissenters that differed from the church of England merely

Renewed
application
for the re-
peal of the
test and cor-
poration
act.

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respecting forms : it was thought by many who belonged to neither, that if the sectaries of the latter kind had drawn a strong line between themselves and the sectaries of the former, they more readily might have experienced the indulgence of legislature. The first of these classes might be compromised under the general name of calvinists or presbyterians ; they branched in a great measure from the church of Scotland, were orthodox in all the essential articles of our religion, and well affected to our constitutional establishment : the second may be comprehended under the general term of unitarians or socinians, heterodox in their opinions concerning the trinity, the divinity of Christ, the necessity of an atonement, and other important articles of christian belief : they were, besides, inimical to our ecclesiastical establishment, and many of them by no means friendly to our political constitution : here was a very important difference ; but there were reasons which prevented the calvinistical dissenters from exhibiting the distinction between themselves and the unitarians. If the presbyterians had the constitutional principles, the unitarians in their number comprehended the abler men : the great talents and learning of Drs. Price and Priestley had diffused their respective sentiments through many ingenious young men, not only originally of their own cast, but others bred in the strictness of presbyterian orthodoxy. It was, indeed, natural for young non-conformists, who were either really able, or aspired at the reputation of literary talents, to follow the admired genius of the heresiarchs, rather than associate with the less splendid, though more

more useful, teachers of the orthodox dissenters. The presbyterians possessed many respectable and some eminent preachers, well fitted for the real business of a clergyman to afford religious and moral instruction to a congregation*; but they had no Price or Priestley fitted to form great political plans, or execute great political undertakings: they did not possess the literary activity which, by circulating arguments in favour of the dissenters, through periodical works, tended to render their cause popular. From the general mass of sectarian literature and exertions, they expected they, in common with the rest, would ultimately obtain their wish: separated from such co-adjutors, their efforts, they knew, must be comparatively feeble, and, therefore, concluded would be unavailing: they never tried the experiment.

A few days after this motion, lord Stanhope proposed a bill “for relieving members of the church of England from fundry penalties and disabilities, to which by the laws now in force they were liable, and for extending freedom in matters of religion to all persons (papists only excepted), and for other purposes therein mentioned.” He presented to their lordships a sketch of all the penal laws enacted upon religion, forcery, and various other subjects: he insisted that it was both unjust and disgraceful to suffer these to remain amongst our statutes: he

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Proposed relief of non-conformists against penal laws,

* Except Drs. Price and Priestley, I do not at present recollect among the socinian and republican schismatics any persons of transcendent genius and profound erudition, or who could with justice be affirmed to surpass Drs. Fordyce and Hunter, and other presbyterians who are still alive.

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is opposed by
the bishops,

and rejected,

proposed, therefore, that they should be repealed; that all persons (papists excepted on account of their dangerous and persecuting principles) should possess the free exercise of their faith, and by speaking, writing, and publishing, be permitted to investigate theological subjects; by preaching and teaching to instruct persons in the duties of religion, in such manner as they should judge the most conducive to promote virtue, the happiness of society, and the eternal felicity of mankind. The bill was strongly opposed by the bishops, as tending to sweep away all order and subordination in religion, and to substitute fanaticism; to unloose the bonds of society, and, under pretence of establishing religious liberty, to open the door to every species of licentiousness, neglect, and even contempt of christianity. Dr. Horsely admitted the absurdity of some of the penal laws, and their total inapplicability to the present circumstances of society; but he objected to the bill, as he thought it would tear up the church of England from the root; and as the destruction of an ally must necessarily affect the interests and existence of the principal, it would tend to destroy the very being of the English constitution: the bill was rejected at the second reading*.

By

* Lord Stanhope, replying to the bishops, said, that if the reverend bench would not suffer him to load away their rubbish by cartfulls, he would endeavour to carry it off in wheelbarrows; and if that mode should be resisted, he would take it away with a spade. Having soon after some conversation respecting the exaction of tithes from quakers, in which he differed from the chancellor, lord Stanhope said, I shall teach

By a vote of the last session, the consideration of the slave trade having been postponed to the present, the commons intended to have resumed it early, but the unforeseen business which occupied the attention of parliament from November to March, rendered it impossible to take it into consideration, until the season was too far advanced for fully discussing such an extensive and complicated subject. The privy council had persevered in investigating the facts; from them a large and elaborate report was presented to the house, and several petitions, both for and against the proposed abolition of the slave trade, were submitted to their consideration. On the twelfth of May Mr. Wilberforce introduced a set of resolutions, amounting to twelve, which he deduced from the report of the privy council. Africa (he said in his prefatory speech) was a country divided under many kings, governments, and laws; a great portion of that region was subjected to tyrannical dominion; men were considered merely as goods and property, and articles of sale and plunder like any other mercantile wares. The kings and princes had been purposely inspired with a fondness for our commodities; they waged war on each other, and ravaged their own country, in order to procure thereby the captivity and disposal of their countrymen; and in their courts of law many poor wretches, though innocent, were condemned to servitude. To obtain a sufficient number of slaves, thousands were kid-

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Slave trade.

Mr. Wilberforce's motion for the abolition.

teach the noble and learned lord law, as I have this day taught the bench of bishops religion. See Parliamentary Debates.

napped

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napped and torn from their families and their country, and sentenced to misery. All these assertions (he said) were verified by every history of Africa, and now confirmed by the report of the privy council. He considered the subject, first, as a question of humanity; and secondly, of policy. From the evidence before the council it appeared, that the number of slaves carried away from Africa, on an average of four years, amounted to thirty-eight thousand annually: of these by far the greater part was brought from the inland country, and at a great distance from the coasts. According to the information that had been received, the persons purchased for slaves consisted chiefly of four classes: first, prisoners taken in war: secondly, persons seized for debt, or on account of real or imputed crimes, particularly adultery and witchcraft, in which cases the whole families of the captives were frequently vended for the profit of those by whom they were condemned: thirdly, domestic slaves sold for the emolument of their masters, at the will of their owner, and in some places on being condemned by them for real or imputed crimes: fourthly, persons made slaves by various acts of oppression, violence, or fraud, committed either by the princes and chiefs of those countries on their subjects, or private individuals on each other; or by Europeans engaged in this traffic. The trade carried on for the purpose of slaves had a necessary tendency to cause frequent and cruel wars among the nations; to produce unjust convictions and aggravated punishments for pretended crimes; to encourage acts of oppression, violence, and fraud; and

and to obstruct the natural course of civilization and improvement in those countries. He considered the subject next on the ground of policy : the continent of Africa furnished several valuable articles peculiar to that quarter of the globe, and highly important to the trade and manufactures of this kingdom. For the slave trade, there might be substituted an extensive commerce, which would equal the profits of that traffic, and would probably increase with the civilization and improvement that would proceed from the abolition of such a barbarous and depopulating merchandize. The infectious distempers arising from the confinement of the negroes rendered the slave trade more destructive to British seamen, than other kinds of commerce on the same coasts, or in equally torrid latitudes. The mode of conveying blacks from Africa necessarily exposed them to many grievous sufferings, which no regulation could prevent : on their passage, and in the West Indies, before they were sold, great numbers perished, and proportionably diminished the value of the cargo : diseases prevailed with peculiar severity among negroes newly imported, and the number of deaths far exceeded the usual mortality of natives. The natural increase of population among negroes in our plantations was impeded by the inequality of the sexes in the importations from Africa ; the general dissoluteness of manners, and the want of proper regulations for the encouragement of marriages, obstructed the nourishment of healthy children ; hence, he concluded, that if we obviated the causes which had hitherto obstructed the natural increase of negroes in

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The ques-
tion is post-
poned to the
following
session.

in the West Indies, and established regulations respecting their food, health, and labour, without diminishing the profits of the planter, no inconsiderable or permanent inconvenience would result from discontinuing the farther importation of African slaves. All impartial hearers, or readers capable of comprehending and appreciating Mr. Wilberforce's view of the slave trade, whatever their opinions might be concerning the evidence on which he grounded his reasoning, agreed in esteeming the present speech and propositions the ablest, fullest, and most masterly exhibition of the reasons for abolishing the traffic, that had been presented on that important subject. The defenders of the traffic did not then enter minutely into the question, but, confining themselves to some general animadversions, postponed a detailed answer to the following session; to which period it was settled that farther consideration should be deferred: meanwhile, the bill brought in by sir William Dolben, for regulating the transportation of slaves from Africa to the West-India islands, was by another act continued and amended.

Mr. Gren-
ville is
appointed
secretary of
state, and
Mr. Ad-
dington suc-
ceeds him
as speaker.

In the beginning of June, lord Sidney resigned the office of secretary of state for the home department, and Mr. Grenville was appointed to supply his place. The speaker's chair being thus vacant, Mr. Henry Addington, member for Berkshire, was proposed for that office by the friends of the ministers, and sir Gilbert Elliot by opposition: the election was carried in favour of Mr. Addington, by a majority of two hundred and fifteen to one hundred and forty-two. On the eleventh of June,
Mr.

Mr. Pitt opened to the house his financial scheme for the year: the permanent income declared necessary by the committee of 1786 to defray the annual demands, was 15,500,000 l.; for the last two years the income had exceeded that sum 78,000 l., but the expences of the preceding year, the armament, the discharge of the prince of Wales's debts, the sums bestowed on the loyalists, and other unforeseen contingencies, had greatly exceeded the usual peace establishment: from these causes the total amount of the supplies required for the current year amounted to 5,730,000 l., besides the annual renewal of exchequer bills: the minister informed the house, that to provide this supply, in addition to the usual resources, a loan for a million would be necessary: this sum he proposed to borrow on a tontine, by which means the incumbrance would in time be removed without any permanent augmentation of the public debt. As the necessity of the loan arose, not from a defalcation of income, but from temporary increase of expenditure, the minister contended, that no fair argument could be adduced from it, tending to discredit accounts that our finances were flourishing, or to diminish the probability of reducing the national incumbrances. To pay the interest of four and a half per cent. for the sum now borrowed, and also to supply the deficiency of 56,000 l. incurred by the repeal of the shop-tax, Mr. Pitt stated, that new taxes would be wanted to the amount of 100,000 l.; for this purpose he proposed to add one halfpenny to the stamp duties on every newspaper, and sixpence additional on each advertisement; fresh duties also upon cards and

Financial
scheme.

A loan is
required
(according
to the mi-
nister) from
a temporary
cause.

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Mr. Sheri-
dan disputes
his calcula-
tions.

dice, upon probates of wills, and upon horses and carriages. The ingenuity of Mr. Sheridan endeavoured to establish the following propositions: that, for the three last years, the expenditure has exceeded the income two millions, and may be expected to do so for three years to come: that no progress has hitherto been made in the reduction of the public debt: that there is no ground for rational expectation that any progress can be made without a considerable increase of the annual income, or reduction of the expences. The committee had declared, upon a comparison between the income and expenditure, that the former would be adequate to the latter without a loan: a loan had, however, taken place. The committee had declared that the annual income would amount to a specific sum; but on an average of three years there had been a deficiency: that the expenditure exceeded the income he endeavoured to prove from calculating probabilities, instead of detailing items; and adopted the same hypothetical mode of argument to support his other positions*. In stating both income and expenditure, he took into the account on the one hand the year 1786 of diminished productiveness from a temporary cause, the reduction of duties, in consequence of a commercial treaty, that so soon compensated this diminution of receipt: on the other the year of 1788, a period of expenditure beyond the usual demands in time of peace; and thus endeavoured to make subjects specially circumstanced the foundation of a general

* See Parliamentary Debates, June 11, 1789.

average.

average. Mr. Grenville, from plain facts and authentic documents, detected, and clearly exposed the sophistical reasoning of extraordinary genius, exercised in forming an hypothesis inimical to political adversaries*.

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Bill for sub-
jecting to-
bacco to an
excise.

To increase the revenue by the farther prevention of frauds, Mr. Pitt proposed a bill for transferring the duties on tobacco from the customs to the excise: tobacco, being a commodity of general consumption, might be rendered a productive source of revenue, but under the present regulations and duties was an article of smuggling, and indeed the principal subject of contraband trade, since the late act concerning tea, wines, and spirits. It appeared on inquiry and investigation, that one half of the tobacco consumed in the kingdom was smuggled, and that the revenue was defrauded by this means to the amount of nearly 300,000*l*. To remedy this evil the most effectual means would be to subject the greater part of the duty on tobacco to the survey of excise: the peculiar benefit of this change in the mode of collection, as a detail of the proceeds proved, had been very clearly exemplified in the article of wine: the manufacturers would no doubt make objections to the present proposition, as dealers in wine had done respecting the change in the duties upon their merchandize: but though they were to be heard with candour, assertions affecting their own interests were to be scrutinized with strictness, and to be no farther admitted than they were supported with collateral

* See Parliamentary Debates, June 11, 1789.

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Popular clamour against it.

proof. While the bill affecting their commodity was pending, dealers in wine had asserted confidently, that, under the restrictions, they could not carry on their trade: the house at that time thought their reasoning insufficient, and tried the experiment; the result had been, that the trade had increased to an astonishing degree. The plan was controverted on general and special ground; by exposing British subjects to summary inspection and summary trials, the extension of the excise laws was inconsistent with the principles of the constitution: there was a peculiar hardship in subjecting this manufacture to the excise, and the total loss of the trade itself would probably be the consequence: the variations in the weight of tobacco, during the process of its manufacture, were so inconceivably great, and at the same time so uncertain, that it would be impossible for the officers of the excise to take any account of stock, which might not subject the retailer, on the one hand, to a ruinous excess of duty, or on the other, to fines and forfeitures equally pernicious: there were, moreover, valuable secrets possessed by manufacturers of tobacco and snuff*; these would be inevitably exposed to the discovery of excisemen, among whom there might be persons capable of profiting by such an opportunity. A loud clamour was echoed through the country against the extension of the excise, as an unconstitutional and oppressive measure, and an infraction of British liberty; but such trite declamation did not influence

* Some of these, it was affirmed, had been purchased at upwards of 10,000 l.

legislature:

legislature. The bill, in its passage through the houses, underwent various modifications; after which it received the royal assent.

On the first of July, Mr. Dundas presented to the house a statement of Indian finance: from this account it appeared, that the annual revenues, after defraying the expence of the different settlements, amounted to 1,848,000 l.; that the interest of the debt was 480,700 l. and the principal 7,604,000 l.; the excess of the revenue beyond the interest was 1,367,300 l. to be applied to the liquidation of their debt. A petition was soon after presented from the company, praying that they might be permitted to add one million to their capital stock. This application was supported by Mr. Dundas, who affirmed that, upon a supposition of the final extinction of their charter in 1794, their effects in Europe would overbalance their debts by the sum of 350,000 l.; and that with respect to their debts in India, they would go along with the territory, and be very readily undertaken by those into whose hands the possession of that territory might come. A bill to enable the company to carry the prayer of their petition into effect was brought in, and passed through both houses with little opposition.

The trial of Mr. Hastings proceeded very slowly; it was the twentieth of April before the court was resumed, and a charge was then opened by Mr. Burke, relative to the corrupt receipt of money. In the course of this accusation, having occasion to mention Nundcomar, Mr. Burke said, that Mr. Hastings had murdered Nundcomar by the hands of sir Elijah Impey. As the proceedings concern-

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It is passed
into a law.
Progressive
prosperity of
India stated
by Mr.
Dundas.

Slow pro-
gress of Mr.
Hastings's
trial.

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ing this rajah made no part of the charges which the managers were appointed to conduct against Mr. Hastings, the defendant petitioned the house either to bring forward and prosecute the allegation in a specific article, or to restrain their manager from assertions totally irrelevant to the business entrusted to the prosecutors. A proposition of censure was moved against Mr. Burke, as having exceeded the authority vested in him by the commons, and employed words which ought not to have been used. The motion occasioned a warm debate, in which the supporters of Mr. Burke contended, that the complaint was made for the purpose of disgusting the managers with the office which they had undertaken; that if admitted it would so narrow their ground of procedure as to defeat the purposes of justice. Those who thought his expressions blameable, insisted that in no criminal process could the imputation of a crime not prosecuted, and consequently by the law presumed not to exist, tend to the attainment of justice. The matter of the charges was definite; to them only was the accuser to speak, and to them only could the defendant answer: an assertion of extraneous guilt without an opportunity of denial, tended to produce an unfavourable impression that might affect the opinion of some judges on the real matter of the charges. The proposed motion, introduced by the marquis of Graham, was carried by a majority of one hundred and thirty-five. The proceedings respecting Mr. Hastings underwent very virulent invectives in periodical journals: one of these had the hardihood to assert, that "the trial of Mr. Hastings was

was to be put off to another session, unless the house of lords had spirit enough to put an end to *so shameful a business!*" This paragraph being complained of in the house, it was unanimously agreed the attorney-general should be directed to prosecute the printer*. A bill was this year introduced into parliament to establish a perpetual anniversary thanksgiving to Almighty God, for having by the glorious revolution delivered this nation from arbitrary power, and to commemorate annually the confirmation of the people's rights. After passing the house of commons it was rejected by the lords, on the ground of being unnecessary, as the service of the fifth of November had been altered for the express purpose of commemorating that glorious event.

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On the eleventh of August ended the longest session which the history has hitherto recorded, after having continued almost nine months without interruption. The chancellor, by his majesty's command, prorogued the houses, and delivered a short speech containing his majesty's thanks for the attention manifested to public business, and the supplies which were granted: though the good offices of his majesty and

* In the course of the conversation to which this motion gave rise, Mr. Burke read from one of the public prints a curious paper, purporting to be a bill of charges made by the editor upon major Scott, for sundry articles inserted in the paper on his account. They chiefly consisted of speeches, letters, and paragraphs, composed by him; and amongst the rest was this singular article: *For attacking the veracity of Mr. Burke, 3 s. 6 d.*

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his allies had not hitherto been effectual for restoring the general tranquillity, yet the farther extension of hostilities had been prevented, and the situation of affairs abroad promised to this country the uninterrupted enjoyment of peace.

CHAP. XLII.

Continental affairs.—The year 1789 eventful to the civilized world.—Change in the relative policy of France and Austria.—Profound policy of Kaunitz in the treaty of Austria with France.—Imperial confederacy—produces the defensive alliance of Britain, Holland, and Prussia.—State of the belligerent powers.—Character of the sultan.—His death.—Succeeded by Selim.—Change of counsels, and effects on military operations.—Successes of the Russians and Austrians.—They respectively capture Bender and Belgrade.—Ottoman empire in danger.—Sweden.—Distresses of Gustavus.—Efforts of his genius and courage for extrication.—Miners of Dalecarlia.—The Danes invade Sweden.—British policy induces the Danes to retreat.—Gustavus suppresses mutiny and faction.—He confirms his popularity.—He directs his whole energies against Russia.—Military and naval campaign between Sweden and Russia.—Commutations in the Netherlands.—State and constitution of these provinces.—Joseph's violent desire of change under the name of reform.—Innovations in the ecclesiastical establishment.—Suppression of religious orders,—and confiscation of their property.—Suppression of ancient, venerated, and beneficial customs.—Change of judicial forms and proceedings.—Arbitrary system introduced.—Subversion of the established legislature.—Progress of despotism trampling liberty and franchises.—Joseph considers his Flemish subjects merely as sources of revenue.—Remonstrances of the Netherlanders.—Meeting of the States.—Deputies are sent to Vienna.—Joseph pretends to grant their requests.—Sends general Dalton to the Netherlands.—Despotic conduct of that officer.—Effects of his tyranny.—Farther cruelty and robbery by Joseph.—The Flemings resolve on forcible resistance.—Declaration of rights.—

rights.—The patriots defeat the Austrian troops.—They form themselves into a federal republic.

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1789 event-
ful to the
civilized
world.

THE summer of 1789 teemed with events of greater importance to the civilized world, than any which are recorded in modern history. Causes that had long secretly operated and gradually increased in force, now manifested themselves in the most stupendous effects. Before, however, the history proceeds to the principal transaction which will render the year 1789 for ever memorable, it is proper to carry the narrative to other subjects that may illustrate the collateral and relative state of other countries at the time in which a system commenced, that changed not only the policy but the opinion, sentiments, and character of continental Europe.

Changes in
the relative
policy of
France and
Austria.

During the last thirty years a very important alteration had taken place in the political relations of the continent. Through a great part of the sixteenth century, and the whole of the seventeenth, the wars which agitated the christian world arose chiefly from the contending ambition of France and of Austria. At the accession of the house of Bourbon, both the royal and imperial princes of Austria had begun to decline from that power which the family had possessed under one head. The infatuated bigotry of Philip undid much of what the skilful policy of Charles had done; nevertheless, the dynasty, in the dominions of both the sovereigns retained a power very formidable to their neighbours. To impair the strength of the house of Austria was the principal object of Henry IV. in
his

his foreign politics. His successors, as we have seen * throughout the seventeenth century, pursued this policy, and with such efficacy as to render the French monarchy far superior to the combined dominions of the two Austrian branches. In the successive wars of Louis the XIII. and XIV. against Spain and Austrian Germany, France made large acquisitions; and that war, which was more fatal to her than any which she had encountered in modern times, secured to her princes the kingdom and dominions of Spain. This was the most disastrous blow which France ever gave to the house of Austria, and appeared to threaten her rapid humiliation. But the maritime ambition of France having driven her to pernicious contests with England, arrested the progress of her continental advantages *: she required a long interval of peace after the death of Louis XIV. to recruit her strength; and at the demise of the emperor Charles VI. she was recovered from her losses, and sufficiently potent to annoy her neighbours. A new co-operator now arose against the house of Austria; the king of Prussia on the one side aggrandized himself at the expence of Maria Theresa, while France pressed her on the other; and at the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle the empress-queen found her hereditary dominions curtailed, and her strength impaired. For a century and a half Austria had been progressively losing; her maritime ally had been uniformly vic-

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* See the Introduction to this history.

† The impolicy of the French contests with England is placed in a very striking light by Soulavie, a writer now at the court of Bonaparte. See his Memoirs of Louis XVI. *passim*.

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torious : but the naval triumphs of Britain had not averted disaster from Austria. Such was the general series of policy and events when Kaunitz came to be the minister of the empress-queen. The penetrating and comprehensive genius of that celebrated statesman saw, that in the whole result of contention Austria was really not a match for France ; and that if she persisted in enmity to that kingdom, she not only would be totally unable to recover her losses, but must incur greater. He conceived a design which, he trusted, would restore the splendor of Austria, and might permit France to embark in projects that he knew to be agreeable to her inclinations, but was convinced would reduce her resources, and leave to her less strength for continental advancement *. Hence arose the treaty of 1756 with France, which suffered Austria, instead of acting on the defensive, to resume her offensive ambition ; and though her projects were defeated for the time by the genius and heroism of Frederic, yet her means of influence and aggrandizement were essentially increased by her amity with France. The want of a continental rival encouraged France to direct her principal efforts to a favourite object, that she never could nor can obtain : she hoped to overpower the naval strength of the mistress of the ocean : failed in the extravagant and impracticable attempts, and wasted at sea that strength which might have made her irresistible by land ; and thus the diminution of the resources and power of France was, as Kaunitz foresaw †, the consequence of her

* See Soulavie's Memoirs of Louis XVI. vol. iii. chap. 8.

† See Soulavie *passim*.

connection with her ancient rival, while Austria by the exhaustion of her neighbour was able to avail herself of the plundering projects of Russia and Prussia; and the dismemberment of Poland was evidently one fruit of Kaunitz's scheme. By the American war France was so much enfeebled, as in a great degree to have lost her former efficiency on the continent of Europe. The antient opponent of Austrian ambition having thus discontinued her efforts, Joseph now hoped by his co-operation with the other principal potentate of the continent, that he would share the spoils of the Turkish empire, strip Prussia of her late acquisitions, extend the Austrian influence in Germany, and raise his family to an extent of dominion and splendor unparalleled since Charles V. In this expectation he had commenced the war, and notwithstanding the untoward events of the preceding campaign, he still trusted that he would ultimately succeed in his projects of lawless spoliation. The principle of British interference in continental politics was uniform; to prevent any other potentate from acquiring such an accession of power as might endanger the independence of Europe, and the security of these realms. The application of this principle led the English cabinet to inspire measures of defence against the imperial aggressors; and in such circumstances to combine with Prussia, which was the most interested, disposed, and able to repel the ambitious confederacy. Frederic William very readily assented; thence arose the defensive alliance, whose political counsels and efforts directed and invigorated the military preparations of the nations that were at

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Imperial
confederacyproduces the
defensive al-
liance of
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State of the
belligerent
powers.

war with Austria and Russia; but the ignorance and barbarity of one of the belligerent maintainers of national independence, prevented her from steadily following the advice of British wisdom.

We left the emperor returned to Vienna with disappointment and disgust, because a war contrary to justice and policy had produced disaster and disgrace; Russia profiting by his efforts, in employing so great a part of the strength of her enemy, and enabled to make a powerful impression on the Turkish dominions. Notwithstanding the loss of Oczakow, the campaign of 1788 had been on the whole favourable to the Ottomans: the advantages on the Danube compensated the loss upon the Niester. The ability of the vizier had invigorated and formed his troops, restored the military character of the Ottomans, and displayed itself in policy as well as in war; but the talents and virtues of this minister were misrepresented by envy, and misapprehended by ignorance: conduct, not only wise but necessary, was imputed to weakness and pusillanimity. One man, however, at court was able to appreciate his merit; this was the sultan himself, Abdulhamet, a prince of a very different character from those who usually filled the Turkish throne: far from the gross ignorance that commonly marked the Ottoman despots, he was distinguished for intelligence and information: instead of ferocity, cruelty, and barbarity, leading features in his character were humanity and beneficence: he was conversant in the languages and sciences of several christian countries: he spoke the Italian, Spanish, and French tongues with considerable fluency, and under-

Character of
the sultan.

understood them all perfectly: he delighted greatly in perusing European books, and conversing with European men; and his favourite subjects of discourse and study were history and politics. Such abilities, acquirements, and dispositions, were not the most favourable to admiration, of either the gloomy superstition or savage despotism of his empire. As a prudent sovereign he scrupulously adhered to the established forms of his country's religion; but by persons who were well acquainted with his acuteness, he was conjectured not to be without a perception of its absurdities: he saw and deeply lamented the dreadful vices of the Turkish government and institutions, but knew them to be so interwoven with the sentiments, opinions*, and characters of mussulmen, that any attempt to effect a reform would be unavailing, until the people themselves should undergo a complete revolution: what he could not correct in principle, he endeavoured to moderate in practice: to improve his subjects, and to prepare them gradually for beneficial change, he encouraged industry and the arts, agriculture, commerce, and manufactures. He abhorred the janizaries, as a body of men insolent and oppressive to his subjects, and dangerous to himself; and had projected the formation of a regular army on the European model, which might have afforded the means of internal tranquillity and of defence from foreign attack, without enslaving the people and endangering the sovereign. In his grand vizier he found a very able counsellor and co-adjutor:

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* Annual Register 1789.

when

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His death.

Succeeded
by Selim.

when that officer returned from the army to the capital, a violent faction having sought his destruction, the sultan ordered him to be arrested, not with a view to inflict summary punishment, according to the usual mode of the Turkish emperors, but to make him stand a fair and impartial trial: the result was an honourable acquittal; soon after which he returned to the army to make dispositions for the approaching campaign. On the seventeenth of April 1789, the Turkish empire experienced a misfortune, productive in its consequences of the greatest calamities and humiliation; Abdulhamet being suddenly seized with a fit in the street, dropped down, and after languishing a few hours expired. He was succeeded by his nephew Selim, of whom great hopes had been entertained, as he was educated under the eye and direction of his excellent uncle: but the first act of his reign by no means confirmed the expectations in his favour; the most tyrannical rapacity manifested itself in his conduct: its first victim was Jussu Pacha, the illustrious grand vizier; this minister possessing wealth to the amount of about a million sterling, was seized at the head of the grand army, conveyed prisoner to Constantinople, sentenced to banishment and the forfeiture of his treasures: on his way to his place of exile he was murdered, his head was brought in triumph to the sultan, and by his orders hung up to grace the gates of the seraglio. Confiscation and execution were the daily acts of the young despot; every wise measure of his uncle was changed, and, except the grand admiral, every able officer and wise counsellor was displaced: the Turkish empire rising to
ancient

ancient glory under the wisdom and virtue of one ruler, was, by the vice and folly of another, soon precipitated to a lower abyss of disgrace and disaster than it had ever experienced. The bashaw of Widin was appointed grand vizier, and soon shewed how totally unqualified he was to supply the place of his predecessor. As the preceding campaign had been successful against the emperor, and unsuccessful against the Russians, the late vizier had proposed for the present campaign an offensive war against the Austrians, to improve the advantages already obtained, and a defensive warfare against the Russians, to prevent their farther progress: the young sultan and his minister, to shew that they would be governed entirely by their own counsels, reversed the plans of their predecessors, and by a most preposterous policy determined to attack the conquerors, and defend themselves against the vanquished *; and on this scheme they concerted their operations. The grand vizier promised to retrieve Oczakow, and marched northward for that purpose: the Russians, under general Kamenskoi, being placed on the borders of Bessarabia, not only protected Oczakow, but endangered Bender: the grand Russian army, under the princes Potemkin and Repnin, was stationed between the Bog and the Neister, to cover their late conquest and make farther advances. A plan of much better concert was this year contrived and executed between the Austrians and Russians, than in the former: the emperor prepared, as before, four armies; his own health did not admit of his taking the command in

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counsels, and
effects on
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operations.

Successes of
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sians and
Austrians.

* See Annual Register 1789, chap. vii.

person

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person, but he prevailed on old marshal Haddick to head his grand army, which was destined to act in the neighbourhood of Belgrade. The troops next in force, the scene of whose exertions was to be the north-west frontiers of Turkey near Croatia and the river Save, he placed under marshal Loudon: the prince of Saxe Coburg took the lead on the side of Moldavia, and co-operated with the Russian general Suwarrow; between him and the grand Austrian army the prince Hohenloe commanded on the frontiers of Wallachia to carry on a war of posts and skirmishes, and to act in concert with either the forces to his right or left, as occasion might require: thus, from Oczakow to Dalmatia, from the northern extremity of the Euxine to the Adriatic, a line of armies extended along the whole frontier of Turkey, amounting to three hundred thousand brave men, well disciplined, commanded by skilful generals, and so stationed as to act with the most perfect concert. Against such a confederacy of force and skill had the Turks to contend; by wickedness and infatuation, deprived of the leaders and counsellors who could have best directed their efforts. The prince of Saxe Coburg first retrieved the honour of the Austrian arms in this war: a Turkish seraskier, at the head of an army of thirty thousand men, being encamped near Focksan, a fortified town in Wallachia, the prince of Coburg, with a much inferior force, attacked him in his camp, and gained a complete victory; the seraskier himself, with a number of his principal officers were taken prisoners; above five thousand of his men were killed or captured; the whole army was dispersed and ruined, while the artillery and

and spoils of the camp, with the town of Focksan, fell into the hands of the conquerors. In Bessarabia the Turks engaged in a number of small and desultory battles, in which they were generally defeated. The vizier seeing no hopes of making good his boast respecting Oczakow, in the month of August, with the grand Turkish army, took a western direction, and came to the heart of Wallachia. The prince of Saxe Coburg and marshal Suwarrow, having marched southwards with an army consisting of near thirty thousand men, attacked the Turkish host, that amounted to ninety thousand, near Martinefte, and with little difficulty or loss gained one of the most signal victories recorded in modern history; ten thousand were killed on the spot, the rout and dispersion was complete; cessation of pursuit from the conquerors only saved the slaughter from being general; and the whole camp, including the grand vizier's tent and equipage, an immense quantity of stores, furniture, provisions, and ammunition, were among the spoils of the conquerors. The fugitives hastened across the Danube, execrating their general, to whose folly and misconduct they imputed their disaster; they reminded him of his boasts, and compared these with his actual performance *. The victors pursuing their advantage,

* So blindly and stupidly arrogant was this weak, headstrong, and ignorant man, that, when he took the command of the army, he caused an immense quantity of iron chains to be made, in order to manacle the legions of Austrian and Russian prisoners, whom he expected to drive before him to Constantinople, as monuments of triumph. At the close of the campaign he was beheaded. See Annual Register 1789.

captured

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They re-
spectively
capture
Bender and
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captured Bucharest, the capital of Wallachia, with the fortrefs of Cyernitz, and reduced the greater part of the province. Near Bender the Turks displayed great valour in several encounters under Hassan Bey; but engaging in a pitched battle, after a very obstinate contest, they were entirely defeated: in consequence of this victory prince Potemkin laid siege to Bender, which, after having vigorously defended itself, surrendered in the month of November. On the western frontiers of the Turkish empire, the most important enterprizes were undertaken on the side of Croatia: marshal Laudohn began the campaign with besieging Gradisca, which in the former year had so vigorously withstood the Austrian attacks: on the twentieth of June, instead of regularly constructing lines of circumvallation, he commenced a violent cannonade and bombardment: the Turks were so much intimidated, that on the second day they evacuated the place: they had, indeed, no confidence in the present commander in chief, the grand vizier; and predestination, mingling with their dejection, on account of so many disasters, they conceived that every attempt against the Russians and Austrians would be totally useless, and that fate had decreed they were to be vanquished: this superstition had a very powerful influence on their conduct, and greatly contributed to the victories of their enemies. After his success at Gradisca, Loudon made preparations for the siege of Belgrade: the Turks were so dismayed, that an operose attack was not necessary: the systematic and steady adherence of the Germans to precedent, however, made them employ the same time and labour

labour in dispositions for this enterprize, that would have been wanted in quite different circumstances, and quite different sentiments of the enemy. Formerly in besieging Belgrade great numbers of boats had been employed by the Austrians, in order to oppose multitudes of the boats employed by the Turks in its defence: at present the Ottomans had on the Danube no nautical force of the kind: the Germans, however, proceeded upon their general principle, both in war and politics, authority and precedent; and like other votaries of the same rules of reasoning, did not very nicely investigate the case: prince Eugene, they said, employed boats in besieging Belgrade; therefore we must use them also: in making preparations upon this principle, so much time elapsed, that it was the twelfth of September before the Austrians invested the place: the trenches were speedily opened, and the batteries constructed; and after a defence of about eighteen days the town was taken by assault. Thus the principal fortresses on the Turkish frontiers fell under the arms of Austria and of Russia; the Turkish troops were defeated, and believing themselves victims of all-powerful destiny, were filled with consternation and dismay; they could no longer bear the sight of their enemy, and any small Austrian or Russian detachment was sufficient to disperse any number of those who attempted to form a body: winter only seemed to retard the subversion of the Ottoman empire.

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Ottoman
empire in
danger.

While the Russians were making rapid stretches to the attainment of their grand objects in the south, their active, enterprising, and intrepid foe in the

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north afforded them considerable annoyance. Gustavus, when about to commence hostilities with Russia, had employed great pains to convince the court of Denmark, that it was the common interest of both kingdoms to oppose the encroaching politics of Catharine. There were, however, several obstacles to a confederation between Denmark and Sweden. The very year in which Gustavus had accomplished a revolution in his own country, great discontents having arisen in Norway, the king of Sweden had studiously fomented them, and almost succeeded in exciting an insurrection. Though the discovery of the design by the court of Copenhagen, before it was ripe for execution, prevented it from being accomplished, yet Denmark had ever since regarded Sweden with a very watchful and jealous eye: Catharine, on the other hand, had cultivated the friendship of the Danish court with the closest assiduity: she had sacrificed to Denmark patrimonial rights and inheritances of person in the duchies of Sleswick and Holstein, and thereby enabled the Danes to round their dominions on the side of Germany. In addition to the general policy by which Catharine established powerful partisans in the neighbouring courts, this conduct enhanced the connection that had long subsisted between Denmark and Russia. The king of Sweden, by subsequent attentions, endeavoured to obliterate in Denmark his measures respecting Norway. On the commencement of the Turkish war he paid a very unexpected visit at Copenhagen; and endeavoured fully to conciliate the court and nation, and to impress them with an opinion of the danger that must

accrue to smaller powers from the ambition of Russia. The court of Denmark could not perceive any of those dangers, which so deeply affected the Swedish king; and accordingly treated, and seemed to consider them as entirely visionary, and mere creatures of his imagination. They lamented that he should entertain intentions of involving himself in so unequal and ruinous a contest, and endeavoured strongly to dissuade him from such an undertaking*. Although the king was unmoved by their arguments, yet he did not entertain the most distant idea of any connection subsisting between Denmark and Russia. Catharine, however, had been so successful in her intrigues at the court of Denmark, that she prevailed on the prince regent to conclude a treaty, by which he bound himself to assist Russia with a certain number of forces, should she be involved in a war with Sweden. Gustavus having no apprehension of hostilities from Denmark, when preparing to open the campaign in Finland, had drawn away his forces to that quarter, and left the vicinity of Norway defenceless; when he was involved in all the trouble and danger occasioned by the refractoriness, or rather the revolt of his army in Finland. The court of Copenhagen issued a public notice to the foreign ministers, and among the rest to the Swedish, who was most immediately concerned, of the conditions by which she was bound to Russia, to supply her with a considerable auxiliary force by sea and land, and of her own determination to fulfil those conditions.

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* See Annual Register, 1789.

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Distresses of
Gustavus.Effects of
his genius
and courage
for extrica-
tion.

This denunciation was soon followed by an invasion of Sweden on the side of Norway in September 1788. In this distressing situation, Gustavus, surrounded by enemies, and deserted by his own troops, appeared overwhelmed with ruin. The contagion from the army had spread through various parts of the kingdom, and infected even the capital; while the nobility seemed fast approaching to the recovery of their former power and consequence in the nation. The senate was eagerly disposed to resume its ancient authority: all the circumstances of the time, the deplorable state of the king's affairs, together with the prevalent disposition of the nobility, rendered them confident of success; they accordingly took measures, without consulting the king, to assemble in diet, the states of the kingdom, under colour of considering the deranged and dangerous state of public affairs, the discontents and disorders which prevailed in the nation. Before this design was executed, the king arrived at Stockholm; knowing, that though the nobility were inimical to his interests, the burghers and people were warmly attached to him, he summoned an assembly of citizens; he therein declared, that reposing the most unbounded confidence in their affection, loyalty, and valour, and being himself called to oppose an unexpected enemy, he should entrust the defence and preservation of the capital, the protection of the queen and family to their faithful zeal. Such an important trust, and sacred deposit, inspired the generous plebeians with an enthusiastic desire of shewing themselves worthy of the royal confidence; they immediately embodied themselves, and cheerfully

fully performed all the duties of soldiers. Gustavus, meanwhile, sent an answer to the intimation of Denmark: he expressed his astonishment that, when peace and friendship had subsisted for sixty years between the two powers without interruption, and he himself had employed his utmost endeavours to preserve a harmony so beneficial to both parties, his Danish majesty should have commenced hostilities: he knew nothing of the engagements subsisting between Denmark and Russia, but he now desired from the court of Copenhagen a direct explanation of its intentions, whether Denmark meant only to act as an auxiliary, by furnishing a stipulated force, or intended direct aggression against Sweden? If the latter was their resolution, he must consider the war as commenced, and act accordingly. Were so unjustifiable a measure adopted, other powers, he insinuated, would, for their own security, interfere to prevent the advances of such ambitious rapacity. The prince regent of Denmark in reply declared, that he had no intention of interfering in the war, any farther than he was bound to Russia by a treaty concluded in 1781, long before hostilities were in contemplation, and that he would not exceed the force therein stipulated: he expressed his earnest desire for the restoration of peace. Meanwhile, the new treaty between Great Britain and Prussia began to unfold its objects, to the great encouragement of all those states that wished to preserve the balance of Europe from being overturned by the imperial confederacy. France, the old ally of Sweden, being unable to afford any assistance, he now looked for

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Miners of
Dolacalla

The Duke

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Miners of
Dalecarlia.

support and protection to the wise and vigorous policy of the defensive alliance, and with confident expectations of ultimate success.

On the confines of Norway, is the province of Dalecarlia, memorable in Swedish history for having afforded shelter and concealment to the celebrated Gustavus Vasa, when flying from the Danish usurpers, and for having begun the revolution which placed that hero on the throne of his ancestors. The inhabitants, sunk in their mines among the rocks and mountains, and secluded from the rest of the world, are ignorant and rough; but hardened by climate, situation, and pursuit, are strong and valiant, and have the honesty and hospitality of generous barbarians: from their ancestors they inherit the warmest loyalty and attachment to their sovereigns; their native courage operating upon this principle, induces them with the promptest heroism to abandon mines and forests whenever their king requires their assistance. To these gallant rustics Gustavus had recourse; he followed the example of his illustrious namesake, and descended to desert mines and caverns to visit the loyal heroes. The second appearance of a king in these recesses, also a Gustavus, and come to solicit their assistance, recalled traditionary glory to the miners of Dalecarlia: they anticipated the application of their sovereign; eagerly proffered their services to defend their prince, and inflict vengeance on the Danes, towards whom they cherished an hereditary hatred ever since the time that they tyrannized over Sweden. The king having testified his gratitude for their loyal and affectionate offers, limited his request to
three

three thousand men. This body was immediately equipt to attend their monarch, and though by no means all provided with regular arms *, yet, furnished with such weapons as they could procure, and inspired with loyalty, with vigorous bodies and intrepid courage, they were a formidable band.

The Danes, meanwhile, entered Sweden from the east part of Norway, under prince Charles of Hesse, and marching along the sea-coast, captured Stramstead, and penetrated as far as Gottenburgh, the principal port of Sweden for foreign commerce; and the governor was about to surrender by an inglorious capitulation: Gustavus was aware of the danger of this valuable city, and sensible that, before he could bring his troops to its relief, the capture might be effected, in order to inspire the inhabitants by his presence, he hastened to the place alone, and travelling night and day, arrived a few hours after the determination to surrender. The king immediately displaced the governor, and having assembled a meeting of the citizens, by the powers of his persuasive eloquence so inspired them with courage and confidence, that they resolved to defend the city to the last extremity. The force, however, of the Danish army, and the ab-

* The author of the Annual Register for 1788, in this part of his narrative observes: "They formed a grotesque appearance; some, whose families had preserved the rusty, uncouth weapons of antiquity, gloried in the possession, and fancied themselves thoroughly equipped for war; but the greater number had no other resource than those rustic instruments of labour used in the mines or in husbandry, which seemed the best calculated for their purpose."

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British po-
licy induces
the Danes
to retreat.

The Danes
invade
Sweden.

sence of the Swedish troops, rendered the success of the defenders very improbable. In this critical situation, the wise, protecting policy of Britain, that has uniformly supported the weak against the strong, interfered for the preservation of Gustavus. There being no ambassador from either Britain or Prussia at the court of Stockholm, Mr. Elliot, envoy at Copenhagen, was sent to the Swedish king, delegate of the allied powers, and to mediate between the belligerent parties. Mr. Elliot sent a letter in his new character from Gottenburgh to prince Charles, informing him that the allied powers had sent a courier to the empress to demand a general armistice; meanwhile, he desired a particular truce, until the effect of the application to Petersburg should be known. Prince Charles answered, that he should not suspend hostilities without the express orders of his court; Mr. Elliot, in reply, informed him, that if the army which he commanded, proceeded farther in offensive operations against Sweden, Prussia would attack Denmark by land, and England would attack her by sea; but that he hoped the prince royal, regent of Denmark, would adopt such measures as would prevent the farther effusion of blood. This notification was not without effect: the Danish general, instead of pressing the siege, sent to his court for instructions. The firm and determined remonstrances of the British ambassador, supported by the strongest and most convincing arguments, manifesting the wise and comprehensive principles of the allied powers, and the real interests of Denmark, so deeply impressed the prince regent, that he agreed to conclude a short armistice;

armistice; after that a longer; and lastly for six months. The Danish army departed from Sweden; but the proffered mediation of the defensive alliance was refused by Russia. Freed by the intervention of the protecting confederacy from the invasion of the Danes, Gustavus had in winter leisure to attend to the internal affairs of his kingdom, and to make preparations for the campaign. He had still very great difficulties to encounter: his army had not only refused to fight in his cause, but actually concluded an armistice with Russia without his consent. The party of his subjects connected with his mighty enemy was extremely powerful and desirous of exerting their strength, in effecting a revolution which would totally overturn the royal authority. In this state of affairs peace must have been of all things the most desirable to the king, and the most suitable to his circumstances; but his potent enemy was too haughty, and too implacable in her resentments, to listen now to accommodation on any terms of equality: she knew his situation, and the advantages which she might derive from his embarrassments; so that personal animosity and political interest dictated the same conduct. The king saw that, desirable as peace would be on fair equitable terms, it could then be attained only by submitting to conditions disgraceful and ruinous: of two great evils war was the smaller; he had no alternative, but either to surrender his crown to disaffected nobles, and the ambitious Catharine, or by magnanimous efforts to conquer both foreign and domestic enemies. In order to cope with Russia, Gustavus had two great objects to be previously accomplished, the

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Gustavus
suppresses
mutiny and
faction.

the subjection of the mutinous army, and the coercion of the rebellious aristocracy. There is an elasticity in vigorous minds which apportions effort to difficulty, and in pressing emergencies produces exertions beyond the previous conception of powers. In such exigencies Gustavus felt that his invention was fertile, his courage undaunted, and his magnanimity elevated: he knew that by a great majority of his subjects he was beloved and revered: in his own genius and fortitude, and in the affection of his people, he sought and found resources. Trusting to his popularity among the plebeian classes, on his return to Stockholm from Gottenburgh, he called a meeting of the magistrates and most respectable citizens of the capital; to these he gave the flattering name of a grand council of state, by whose advice he professed to be governed in all his measures: he thanked them for the care with which they had executed the important trust committed to them in his capital and family: he informed them that in the preceding campaign, instead of retrieving Swedish glory, the national honour had been blasted by the disaffection of his nobles: these had corrupted his army, had led it to the disgraceful and fatal excess of a mutiny, in the presence of their sovereign, and in the face of a foreign enemy. Expatiating upon these subjects, he impressed his audience with the fullest conviction, and they unanimously declared for the continuance of the war; with a warm assurance of their lives and fortunes being devoted to his service. Having secured the support of his capital, he waited with confidence for the meeting of
of

of the states ; determined as to the measures which he would pursue, if they continued refractory. On the twenty-sixth of January, the diet having met the order of the nobles, immediately displayed their animosity to the king, and their disregard for his authority : they grossly insulted count Lowenhaupt, the president appointed by his majesty, and even treated the name of Gustavus himself with great virulence and contempt. The king having found that the three other orders, the peasants, clergy, and burghers, were unanimous in supporting the war, disregarded the opposition of the nobles, and determined to repress their insolence. On the seventeenth of February he repaired in person to the diet to demand satisfaction for the insult that was offered to the president, his representative in the assembly : a violent altercation here arose between the king and nobles, in the course of which his majesty made a charge of disaffection and treason ; the nobles arose and left the assembly : the king addressing the three remaining states, most solemnly disclaimed every intention of aspiring at absolute authority, but declared there was a faction in the kingdom inimical to Sweden, and devoted to her enemy ; that for the good of the country the faction must be crushed. The states unanimously expressed their concurrence with his majesty, and their determination to support any measures which he should think expedient for so desirable a purpose. On the twentieth of February, the king having communicated his plan of procedure to the three estates, ordered twenty-five of the principal nobility to be arrested, and the officers who had been
been

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been most active in exciting mutiny, to be seized and brought to Stockholm for trial. These vigorous measures received the general approbation of the three remaining orders. Gustavus proceeded in his efforts, and formed the bold measure of abolishing the senate, a council consisting chiefly of nobles, and that had of late greatly thwarted the king: his vigorous resolution entirely suppressed this assembly, without the least commotion or opposition, and in its place he instituted a new council, totally dependent on himself: the nobles were so much dismayed and intimidated by these acts, that they suffered Gustavus to extend his changes: his majesty to secure and confirm the remaining orders in their attachment, granted them respectively such new privileges, and paid them such honours, as he knew they would most highly value. To render these alterations permanent, Gustavus proposed an act of confederation, union, and surety, by which he and all true Swedes were to be mutually bound in the most firm and solemn manner, not only to common defence, but to the preservation of the present constitution and laws, against all impugnors, whether foreign or domestic. Though the nobles so far recovered from the consternation as to oppose this measure, yet his majesty directed the president to subscribe it in their name; and thus Gustavus effected in a few weeks a revolution, which entirely destroyed the authority that the nobles had been so long endeavouring to re-establish, and the influence which the intrigues of Russia had been so many years employed in acquiring. The trials of the officers charged with mutiny, commenced

He confirms
his popula-
rity.

commenced soon after the arrest; and though the necessity of obedience and military subordination required condign punishment, the executions were not numerous.

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By the reduction of the nobles, the suppression of the mutiny, and his popularity with the other states, Gustavus was now master of the whole efficient force of his kingdom, and thereby was enabled to make a vigorous preparation for prosecuting the war with Russia: besides the supplies afforded him by the estates, he received a very considerable sum from the Ottoman porte. Before he opened the campaign against Russia, the strong arguments, and urgent instances of Mr. Elliot, on the part of the defensive alliance, prevailed upon Denmark to consent to an absolute neutrality, and thus freed the Swedish king from that source of apprehension. Gustavus was now enabled to direct his whole attention and force to the prosecution of the war in Finland, and opened the campaign in the beginning of June. On the twenty-eighth a very fierce battle was fought between the Swedes and Russians, in which the latter had almost prevailed, when the king springing from his horse, put himself at the head of his infantry, rallied them, and compelled the enemy to fly. Various skirmishes were afterwards fought, in which the Swedish monarch displayed the most intrepid and active valour, bold and fertile genius*: the successes were various; but during the first part of the campaign most fre-

He directs
his whole
energies
against
Russia.

Military
and naval
campaign
between
Sweden and
Russia.

* Gustavus depended entirely on genius and heroism; being deficient in military experience and skill, as he himself afterwards acknowledged in conversation with the marquis de Bouillé. See Memoirs, p. 396.

quently

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quently on the side of Sweden. Encouraged by his advantages, the hero penetrated into Russian Finland, having on the coast a fleet of light galleys to co-operate with the army as occasion might require. Between this fleet and another of the same sort from Russia a battle was fought, in which great numbers were destroyed on both sides: the Swedes were obliged to retire; and though they were not totally defeated, the superiority of the Russians was such, that it compelled Gustavus to evacuate the enemy's country*. The season being now too far advanced to admit military operations in those cold latitudes, both armies withdrew into winter quarters, and the king returned to Stockholm. The duke of Suddermania, the king's brother, commanded the principal fleet of Sweden, but no decisive action took place between his armament and the fleet of Russia.

Commo-
tions in the
Netherlands,

State and
constitution
of these
provinces,

While the emperor was by his preparations and expence, together with the misconduct of the enemy, obtaining victories and conquests from which he could derive no permanent advantage, he was endangering his most productive possessions. The Netherlands, first of all the states of modern Europe, successfully cultivated agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, and acquired at an early period a considerable degree of liberty. They consisted of independent states, resembling one another in their pursuits, manners, character, and constitution of government. Their polity was composed of three orders, the nobles, clergy, and people, under the limited principality of one person denominated count: the

* Annual Register 1789, chap. 8.

contests between the prerogatives and privileges of the respective principalities, according to their result, gave different modifications to the freedom which they all possessed, and which they continued to retain under various families of princes that happened, through intermarriage, to succeed to the sovereign authority. The best defined, and most perfect of their political systems, was the constitution of Brabant. The great charter of that country was no less venerated by the inhabitants, than the charter of Runnymede is revered by Englishmen: from a circumstance attending its execution, it was known by the name of Joyous Entry. The inhabitants of the Austrian Netherlands were extremely devoted to their ancient religion: this predilection probably arose, partly from their long intercourse with Spain, and, perhaps, still more from the animosity between them and their neighbours and countrymen the Dutch, that originated in wars in which they were the principal sufferers: but, whatever might be the cause, it is a certain fact, the Netherlanders were extremely addicted to the most absurd and extravagant tenets of the Roman catholic faith: they manifested a very warm affection to their princes, both the aboriginal sovereigns of the country, and their descendants of the house of Austria. Upon the accession of the German branch of that house to the dominion of these provinces, Charles VI. was received by the people with the greatest cordiality and good-will, he having first sworn at his inauguration, as his successors have constantly done, to the preservation of their ancient constitutions and rights. During the distresses of the family, at the accession of Maria Teresa, they derived

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derived the most essential benefit from the zeal and fidelity, the loyalty, and the resources of money and of men, which were supplied by their subjects in the Low Countries. The free subsidies were granted with a liberality proportioned to the emergency for which they were required: they continued during her life to manifest undiminished affection, and cherished the same sentiments for her son Joseph. Beloved by them before, the emperor had confirmed their attachment by the flattering hopes which he raised in the Low Countries, that he would recover and open to them the navigation of the Scheldt. Blasted as their expectations were, imputing the disappointment to necessity, they had not relaxed in attachment to their sovereign; and though they did not rise in their estimation of his political and military abilities, they were grateful for the benignity of his intention. The spirit, however, of restless innovation, which so much distinguished the active, but superficial character of Joseph, soon extended to the Netherlands, and interfered with their ancient privileges and ancient religion, the two objects of which they were most peculiarly tenacious.

No position in political philosophy is more obvious, than that systems of polity, civil or ecclesiastical, must be adapted to the sentiments, habits, opinions, and even prejudices of the people*: such reforms, therefore, as overlook these, however abstractedly agreeable to reason and rectitude, are neither reasonable nor right in their application to those particular cases, because they do not conduce

* See Aristotle's Politics.

to the happiness of the subject. The clergy were alarmed and enraged; the people grieved and astonished by the suppression of religious houses, to which, however absurd in the enlightened views of an Englishman, the Netherlanders annexed an importance that a wise ruler would have regarded. It was soon seen that reform was not his only object; and that he desired change for the sake of confiscation, that he might procure the means of gratifying an extravagant and infatuated ambition. Men of abilities and enlarged minds, being totally free from bigotry and superstition, thought that some of the monasteries and convents might be very easily spared; but by no means relished suppression for the sake of plunder: the same rapacity which seized that species of property, would, they apprehended, extend to other kinds of possessions. The ecclesiastical order formed a very powerful, numerous, and opulent body in the Low Countries; and their property, of every sort, was estimated at the immense sum of twenty-five millions sterling. The states being composed of the representatives of the clergy, the nobility, and the commons: the church had likewise possessed, from time immemorial, at least a third part in the government of the country. It was apprehended, from the emperor's conduct, that he had projected to destroy the privileges of this order, as a preliminary step to the seizure of their immense wealth. All ranks were alarmed, and began to coalesce, in order to oppose an innovating system, the real purpose of which they conceived not to be reform but robbery. Those who were themselves merely anxious for the preservation

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Joseph's
violent de-
fire of
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der the
name of
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Innovations
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clesiastical
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ments.

Suppression
of religious
orders,

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cation of
their pro-
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Suppression
of ancient,
venerated,
and benefi-
cial customs.

of their civil rights, found it expedient to encourage the discontents of the clergy, and even to profess sympathy with the superstition and bigotry of the lower orders: these various causes coinciding, formed a compact and powerful opposition against the dangers which threatened their ancient establishments. Fortunately for his subjects and neighbours, as the objects of Joseph were wicked, his policy was weak: he was totally deficient in that dexterity and address, which can varnish mischievous schemes, and smooth the way for their reception: he neither tried disguise, insinuation, nor deceit, the usual engines of ability attempting injustice, where the effect of force would be doubtful: his heart dictated usurpation and injury, but his head was not well fitted for ensuring success: a harsh arbitrary and imperious display of authority appeared in all his measures: he was particularly desirous of suppressing ancient customs, and changing ancient institutions. There was a festival of great antiquity in the Low Countries, called the Keremesse, and highly venerated by the inhabitants: it was a season of mutual visiting, and of reconciling differences, not only between individuals, but villages; it was equally a season for contracting marriages, forming new friendships, and renewing and cementing the old. This innocent source of festive recreation, this laudable occasion of social virtue, was in the emperor's innovating zeal suppressed. The disposal of land and revenue, belonging to the abolished convents, produced great dissatisfaction and complaint: they were rendered part of the royal domains, and merely filled the coffers of the emperor.

His next attempt was upon the abbacies, the most opulent and splendid of the religious establishments. Several of these conferred a right on the possessors, of being directly inherent members of the states. In Brabant this high distinction and privilege in favour of the abbots, was carried to a greater extent than elsewhere; for the whole of the clergy, being the first order of the state, were represented by abbots only. Joseph did not at first subvert the abbacies, but as the incumbents died, placed them to be held *in commendam*, which was directly contrary to an express article of the Joyous Entry. In the beginning of 1787 he published two edicts, which entirely absorbed the consideration of every smaller change: by these all the tribunals *, all the forms and course of civil justice, which for so many centuries had been established and pursued in the Low Countries, which the people had so long considered as their glory, and regarded with enthusiastic admiration, were to be abolished in one day. The forms of process in the old courts were fair and open: they publicly exhibited the series of evidence, rules of interpretation, the principles applied, and

* The principal tribunals were in the villages; a court held by the lord of the manor, who in smaller cases delegated his authority to a set of reputable men within his district; but in greater judged himself, being assisted by two eminent counsellors to expound the laws. In the cities the jurisdiction was in the hands of their respective magistrates: there was a supreme tribunal composed of sixteen judges and a president, in which, causes either civil or criminal might originate; and in civil cases an appeal lay from the inferior courts. See Annual Register 1789, p. 207.

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Change of
judicial
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system in-
troduced.

grounds of decision. New tribunals were appointed, in which the secrecy of despotism marked the proceedings; witnesses were privately examined, the parties were often ignorant of the evidence on which they were tried, and the decision was left to a single judge, who was to determine according to his discretion without any existing law. The persons appointed to this office were foreigners*, totally unacquainted with the ancient laws of the Netherlands, or at least altogether regardless of their spirit and tenor. Such modes of judicial procedure, combined with the other parts of the emperor's conduct, were considered as the forerunners of proscription and tyranny: they excited great alarm among the people, not without a determination to resist acts so contrary to the compact by which Joseph held the sovereignty of the Netherlands. But the second edict advancing in lawless usurpation, confirmed their resolution not quietly to submit to the destruction of their rights.

The states of the Netherlands were justly deemed by the people the guardians of their laws, liberty, and property; and in them was vested the power of imposing taxes on the subjects, and granting subsidies to the prince. In the exercise of this power they had uniformly satisfied both parties, by liberal grant without burden-

* The baron de Martini, an Italian, was sent into the Low Countries, with the title of Imperial Commissary, to establish and regulate the new tribunals, and to prescribe to a nation, which had for many ages gloried in the freedom, as well as the equity of its civil institutions, in what manner justice should be dispensed in future.

some impost. The assembly of the states met annually at Brussels, and having performed the most material part of their business, entrusted the rest to a select committee, whose proceedings they reviewed at the following meeting. This legislative branch of the constitution was no less valued than the judicative, but the emperor in his second edict proclaimed its subversion; he abolished the old institutions and forms, and substituted an engine of state under the name of a council of general government, which, while it drew all public affairs within the sphere of its own action, was to be ruled by the court minister who was placed at its head. Without nominally annihilating the assembly of the states, the new form of government really destroyed its powers: it ordained, that the states might nominate a deputy, who, if approved of by the minister and his council, might be a member of that council, and when required by the minister was to sign all the acts formerly exercised by the states, but now to be proposed by the council. Thus, the states were really to have no other power but to subscribe imperial mandates; and their authority was to be exercised by a nominal representative, under the controul of the minister and his council: the jurisdiction of this new council was farther to extend to all cases of police and revenue; all persons even suspected, or pretended to be suspected, were the objects of inquisitorial procedure, by order of the council and minister, from whose decrees there lay no appeal. When the nature and extent of this despotic usurpation was understood and comprehended, the people very loudly expressed indignant resentment against so daring a violation of that

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Subversion
of the esta-
blished legis-
lature.

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convention, by which only the archduke of Austria held the limited sovereignty of the Netherlands. In language less mindful of his rank than descriptive of his conduct, they plainly and unequivocally charged Joseph with having violated the inaugural compact and oath, and not obscurely intimated, that a breach of a conditional contract by one of the parties absolved the other from its obligations. Those who were most favourable to the emperor, alleged, that the obnoxious edicts proceeded from mistaken views of the public good, and not from a design upon their liberties: according to such advocates he had suppressed the ancient tribunals, that the people might be enabled to obtain justice in a less expensive and more compendious way, and his alteration of the government was designed to give it more simplicity and energy: the small military force in the Low Countries was totally inadequate to the establishment of an absolute sovereignty; he had been deceived by partial and false representations, and misled by evil counsellors. The reply to this species of vindication was obvious; whether violation of their dearest rights proceeded from the despotic intentions, or the defective judgment of the sovereign, it was equally incumbent on subjects to defend their constitutional liberties: though the conduct of the emperor was, in all his dominions, such as to evince a narrow understanding, yet in the Netherlands, and every other part, it was so uniformly directed to one object, the invasion of property to increase his own revenue, that misinformation and erroneous reasoning did not account for its general tenor; *no person could be a systematic robber by mistake.*

The

The emperor's chief counsellor was the count Belgiojoso his minister, a Milanese, a great favourite with his master; and who possessing all the subtlety, artifice, and crooked policy of an Italian statesman, was extremely disagreeable to the open, frank, and honest Flemings. The governor-general, the duke of Saxe Teschen and his wife, the archduchess's sister to the emperor, were extremely popular, and never suspected of promoting any unconstitutional designs; but the minister possessed the real power of government. Belgiojoso proceeded to a violent exercise of the powers so lawlessly usurped; indeed, if he had conceived a design of extending and consolidating a revolt, he could not have formed a more efficacious plan for the purpose: having excited the resentment of the civil orders, by the overthrow of the established judicature and legislature, he next attacked the clerical order, not as before, by suppressing certain fraternities, the least essential to the church, but those institutions which nourished its appropriate learning, preserved its most important rights, and that literature and science from which it chiefly derived its influence. The principal university of Brabant was the Louvain, one of the most celebrated schools of Roman catholic theology; distinguished for the extraordinary reverence with which it regarded the supreme pontiff, by its profound respect for the priesthood, and consequently highly prized by zealous votaries of the Romish church: all its colleges were abolished, and a general seminary was established, in which, by an edict, all youth designed for the church were required to pursue their

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theological studies. For this new school a German rector and professors were appointed, to the exclusion of native teachers. Such a change, violating the ecclesiastical constitution, and tending to introduce new doctrines of theology, was warmly opposed by the bishops, the university, and the people. The Low Countries, so long famous for the purity of its catholic faith; the Louvain, the nurse of holy religion, was to be contaminated with the heresies in which Germany abounded. The minister enjoined father Godefroy, visitor of the capuchins at Brussels, to send the young students of his order to be educated in the general seminary: this clergyman refused to comply; Belgiojoso commanded him to depart from Brussels in twenty-four hours, and the emperor's dominions in three days. Such a violent act afforded a new subject of complaint to those who were zealous in religion, and strengthened the abhorrence of the new seminary; but it increased the apprehensions of the progress of arbitrary power, which were already so generally entertained. The emperor and his counsellors appeared to have adopted, respecting his richest and most productive dominions, one of the most dangerous principles that can actuate the conduct of a government, *that subjects are merely to be considered as a source of revenue*, and the expediency of political plans and acts to be estimated by their tendency to supply the coffers of the prince. The discontents and commotions in the Netherlands very greatly diminished its financial efficiency, and consequently defeated the purpose which the authors of the innovations meant chiefly to promote.

The

Joseph considers his Flemish subjects merely as sources of revenue.

The minister pretending to impute the defalcation to contraband traffic, proceeded in a summary and arbitrary way against persons whom he professed to suspect to be engaged in such a commerce. One respectable and eminent merchant, who held a contract with government, was, after his accounts had been closed and passed, charged with a fraud: he challenged his accusers to make good their assertions by a fair and open trial, agreeably to the laws of his country; but, instead of a legal inquiry, he was seized by armed soldiers, and hurried away to Vienna. So flagrant a tyranny, joined to the general system, impressed the people with a belief, that their only alternative was subjection to foreign despotism, or vigorous and immediate resistance.

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In Brabant the constitution had been the most precise, and its violations the most manifest; and there the resistance was the most prompt. In Brussels the companies of arts and trades, nine in number, chose representatives, each known by the name of syndic: these delegates constituted a corporation, intitled the syndics of the nine nations: they possessed not only municipal power, but also very considerable political direction in the choice of members for the assembly of the states; and being composed of the chief citizens, they added extensive influence to their strength. This was the first public body which expressed its sentiments concerning the usurpations: they drew up a plain bold memorial, that stated actual facts and obvious consequences; and enumerated the conditions on which the prince of the Low Countries held his sovereignty, as set forth in the Joyous Entry: the representation

Remon-
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the Nether-
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quoted Joseph's inaugural oath to observe the prescribed stipulations, and his actual conduct, which was a systematic violation of his engagements; and concluded, that "if the sovereign shall infringe upon the articles of the Joyous Entry, his subjects shall be discharged from all duty and service to him, until such time as due reparation shall be made for such infringements." This animated remonstrance inspired and guided the other cities, and also the other provinces; and the people in general were determined to assert their rights; but before they should commence any active exertions, they waited the meeting of the states, that they might know how far they could trust to their counsel and co-operation.

Meeting of
the states.

The assembly met, and the very first step demonstrated the firm and resolute part which they intended to act. An application having been made for subsidies, they totally refused to grant supplies until grievances were redressed; they sent immediate orders to the collectors of the revenues to pay no regard to the financial officers appointed by the new council, since they exercised an authority which was not admitted by the Flemish constitution: they then drew up a declaration of rights, a statement of grievances, and an exhibition of consequences, both more detailed and comprehensive than that of the syndics, and which avowed their determination to persevere in maintaining the constitution of their ancestors: this manifesto they addressed to the governor-general. At the same time Mr. Vandernoot, a counsellor of Brussels, and an eminent advocate in the cause of liberty, published a treatise addressed to the states, in which, from
ancient

ancient documents, he traced out and elucidated the constitution of Brabant. The states not only ordered this treatise to be read in their presence, but decreed public thanks to the author, for having so ably and justly vindicated the rights of the people. The states of Flanders and Hainault concurred in the determination to resist all the unconstitutional changes. The governors-general endeavoured to break the force of the opposition by small concessions, and liberal promises: the Italian, to his great surprise, found that the Flemings were not to be intimidated; and, until he could be supplied with an adequate force, he had recourse to the more appropriate instruments of his country, duplicity and deception: the attempt, however, was now too late; the patriots persevered in their efforts, and held out to the minister the terrors of an ancient statute of Brabant, that declared it lawful to apprehend and to punish any person who should obstinately persist in obstructing the public good: they abolished the new seminaries and other unconstitutional innovations; urged the governors-general speedily to redress their grievances; and added, that the people were in such a ferment, that they could not answer for the consequences of longer delay. The minister had hitherto obstructed concessions on the side of the governors-general, but now pretended no longer to oppose conciliatory measures: alarmed at the revolution in the temper and dispositions of a people from whom they had before experienced the most affectionate attachment, the governors resolved, as far as their power extended, to restore the tranquillity and happiness of

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of the provinces. They issued a decree on the thirtieth of May, declaring that all arrangements contrary to the Joyous Entry should be entirely set aside, and that due reparation should be made for all infringements on that great charter which the people held so sacred: they hoped the emperor would ratify this declaration, and promised to exert their utmost influence with him to accomplish such a desirable purpose. This proclamation at first diffused general joy through the Netherlands; but these sentiments were interrupted by doubts concerning the emperor's ratification. Joseph, instead of sanctioning the decree, dispatched a mandate to the states of the Low Countries, strongly expressing his astonishment, indignation, and displeasure, at those intemperate and violent measures which the states had adopted, and that bold defiance which they had given to his authority: his edicts had not been intended to subvert the constitution, but to correct ancient abuses, and to make salutary reforms. As a proof of their obedience he required the states of each province to send deputies to Vienna, to lay their subjects of complaint at the foot of the throne. As a father he would pardon the errors and temerity of his subjects, but would severely punish them, if they continued refractory.

Disappointed by so imperious an order, and so unfounded reprehension, they did not sink under the insolent claims of usurped authority, but took vigorous measures for their own security. To prevent, however, matters from coming to extremities, they thought it prudent to comply to a certain extent with his requisition: they appointed deputies, entrusted

Deputies are
sent to Vi-
enna.

trusted with very limited powers, merely to express the loyalty of the nation, and to state their grievances, but to come to no conclusions respecting public affairs, without the special and immediate order of the states. While the deputies were on their journey, they were informed that great bodies of imperial troops were marching towards the Low Countries. Though this intelligence greatly agitated, yet it did not depress the minds of the Flemings: resolved to maintain their liberties at every hazard of their lives and fortunes, they calculated their strength and resources, and found them much superior to those with which the Dutch had formerly resisted Spanish despotism: they hoped for the interference of the powers that were already inimical to Joseph's ambition; and that France in particular would willingly accept of the sovereignty of the Netherland provinces, so beneficial and commodious, upon the constitutional conditions which they would most gladly offer. The governors-general having been called to Vienna, to be present when the deputies should appear before the emperor; Count Murray, a nobleman of Scottish extraction, commander of the Austrian troops in the Netherlands, was appointed governor during their absence. This officer, a man of prudence and temper, endeavoured to accommodate matters by moderating the fervour of the people, and the imperiousness of the sovereign. The Flemings, meanwhile, were turned with the most anxious expectation to the reception of their deputies at Vienna; and the first accounts were very far from being satisfactory. When presented to the emperor they

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were received with all that angry haughtiness which narrow understandings and illiberal sentiments in power produce to real or supposed inferiors, when they are the objects of displeasure. Undismayed by imperious insolence, the deputies stated their grievances; but Joseph informed them, that before he would vouchsafe to explain himself upon that subject, there were certain preliminary articles that count Murray would communicate to his states: the articles were, that things should be restored to the same footing in which they had stood at the meeting of the states; that the new tribunal council and seminaries abolished by the Flemings should be restored, the subsidies paid, and the volunteers dismissed: if these articles were not executed, the Austrian army should proceed in its march to the Netherlands.

The Flemings with great indignation refused to comply, and between volunteer corps, and parties of soldiers, quarrels and skirmishes arose, not without the effusion of blood; every thing, notwithstanding the conciliatory efforts of count Murray, seemed tending to hostilities, when dispatches arriving from the deputies totally changed the public sentiments; by these it appeared, that harsh as the first reception of the deputies had been, at succeeding interviews the emperor had declared, that though he had thought it consistent with the dignity of his throne to testify his displeasure at the violent proceedings of his Flemish subjects, he was really favourable to their requests; and though he would not consent to the re-establishment of convents, nor to restore the nomination of abbots, he would grant all the other principal articles:

Joseph pretends to grant their requests.

articles: he never proposed * to enforce his edicts by arms, and was willing to restore the Joyous Entry to its primitive vigour; he intended to visit the Netherlands, and to concert measures with the states for the welfare of his people. These agreeable declarations were accompanied with an unassuming and engaging politeness, which manifested, if not the ability of a statesman, the versatility of a courtier. The deputies were so captivated with the manners and address of the emperor, that they received every assurance and profession with unbounded faith: their constituents, though not so implicit in their confidence, yet were greatly pleased, and at last agreed to pay the subsidies into the royal treasury, as a mark of their reliance on the emperor's protestations. The count Murray in return published a declaration from the emperor, by which the Joyous Entry of Brabant was to be preserved entire, as well with respect to the ecclesiastical as the civil orders; the new tribunals were to be suppressed, and the ancient courts of judicature to resume their function. The sovereign promised, that whatever infraction had been made upon the Joyous Entry, he would employ measures for granting redress. This accommodation between the emperor and his subjects diffused a general joy through the Low Countries. But the moderate system now adopted by Joseph, by discerning politicians, was imputed to particular circumstances, and not to any deviation from his general principles of action. In his inno-

* See Declaration of the emperor to the states of the Belgic Provinces; State Papers, July 3, 1787.

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vating plan he had proceeded on the supposition, that the Netherlanders would make no material opposition, and that his wishes might be accomplished without distracting his attention, or withdrawing his force from the execution of his other schemes. From the spirit and vigorous conduct of the Flemings he saw that they could not be brought to submission without a considerable army, the employment of which in that service would weaken his efforts against the Turks; he therefore abandoned one unjustifiable project of aggression, that he might the more effectually promote another; and it was inferred, that really he had only postponed his design respecting the Low Countries to a more favourable opportunity. The great object* of Joseph appears to have been to establish one simple uniform military system of government through all the parts of his vast dominions. This purpose was obstructed in the Netherlands by the present concession: there were, besides, important articles left unsettled, which might be the ground of future dispute. His expressions, upon being more closely examined than during the first ebullitions of joy, were found to be general and vague. On reflection, the Flemings perceived that they held no pledge from the sovereign but his promises, while in disbanding the militia they had given the most solid and substantial security on their part†. The emperor, after he had expressed his approbation of the lenient and conciliatory conduct of count Mur-

* Annual Register 1787, chap. viii.

† Annual Register 1789, p. 38.

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Sends ge-
neral Dalton
to the Ne-
therlands.

ray, appointed another commander in chief, who had no local connections in the Netherlands; this was general Dalton, a soldier of fortune from Ireland, brave and enterprising, but whose principle of conduct was simply obedience to his master's orders, whatever they might be, or whatever rights they might violate. He had been employed against the rebellious mountaineers of Transylvania, and acquired considerable reputation by his military efforts; but had been noted for the cruelty with which he treated his prisoners. Count Trautmanndorff was appointed to the civil government, to the great satisfaction of the Low Countries, as he was a man of very amiable dispositions, and extremely popular; but it soon was found, that in power he was totally subordinate to Dalton. The governors-general were by the emperor's new plan to be mere pageants of state and splendor, without any share of the government.

The first manifestation of the emperor's perseverance in the plan which he pretended to relinquish, was an attack upon the university of Louvain. While the Flemings were cherishing the hopes of preserving their revered constitution, and indulging the convivial festivity of the Christmas season, exhilarated by the flattering prospect, a peremptory order arrived in the emperor's name to the members of Louvain university, commanding them, without deliberation, delay, or remonstrance, immediately to enregister in their archives, and submit to, the system of reform prescribed by the sovereign. These mandates the university peremptorily refused to obey; they pleaded their con-

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conduct of
that officer.

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stitutional rights, and appealed to the laws and justice of their country for protection. The minister, in his reply to this appeal, propounded a very simple and comprehensive principle, *that subjects must not plead rights, laws, justice, or their constitution, against the will of the sovereign.* Declarations were issued, commanding them to conform to the mandates of the emperor, and threatening the severest vengeance against all persons who should dare to assert a right contrary to the will of his imperial majesty. These dictatorial menaces were totally disregarded by the university, which was determined to assert its freedom. Count Trautmansdorff was now become entirely subservient to Dalton, and in his conduct shewed, that the amiable dispositions and pleasing manners which had rendered him so popular, were not fortified by vigour, or secured by virtuous principles. This minister, by the direction of Dalton, sent a letter to the grand council of Brabant, requiring their efforts to reduce to obedience the refractory university, and specifying the time before which the mandate was to be executed: the council, with a dignified indignation replied, that the letter was founded in ignorance of their laws, tended to despotism, and must be revoked. The minister replied, that it was his majesty's absolute determination, that *on whatever subject he signified his will, obedience must follow*; and he gave them twenty-four hours for publishing the decree. His commination being still disregarded, the following day he sent a notice, that if the decrees were not published within two hours, he should have recourse to the dire expedient of cannon and bayonets,

onets, which his majesty had most expressly prescribed. The council still paid not the smallest attention to those insolent threats; Dalton drew up a regiment of infantry near the council-house, and ordered an ensign with a party of troops to patrol the streets. This officer, young, inexperienced, and desirous of shewing power, on some trifling disturbance, ordered his men to fire a platoon among the multitude, killed six of the people, and wounded many more: the juvenile instrument of military despotism and murder, dreading the just vengeance of the people, hastily fled with his party to the main body of soldiers. The emperor informed of this atchievement, highly applauded the ensign's conduct, and desired Dalton to inform him he *might expect promotion* on the first vacancy: he also expressed his warmest gratitude to Dalton for *supporting the dignity of the military character, and impressing the people with a due dread of the soldiers.* This massacre, *unimportant* (THE EMPEROR SAID) *as it was in itself*, might produce a salutary effect; but to insure obedience it was necessary for Dalton *to persevere in the same meritorious conduct* *. The army being once employed against the people, constant insolence and frequent bloodshed were the result. The people expressed their indignation in riots and tumults: one of these being quelled without firing a shot, the emperor, in a letter to his ministers, testified his disapprobation of such forbearance, and desired it might not be repeated. Trautmansdorff declared, that if the troops

* Annual Register, 1789.

serving in the Netherlands were not sufficient, forty thousand men would immediately enter the Low Countries: this assertion his hearers well knew to be a boasting bravado, as the emperor's troops were elsewhere fully employed. It is frequently difficult to discover the precise motive for conduct which is dictated by unprincipled wickedness, and guided by extreme folly. As Joseph's armies were engaged in the Turkish war, policy obviously dictated forbearance of injustice and tyranny in the west, that he might effectually promote aggression and spoliation in the east. His force in the Low Countries was very inadequate to his despotic purposes, or to the cruel intentions of his deputy. At the very time that the emperor was enjoining perseverance in military despotism to his willing and prompt underling, he, through the governors-general, issued a declaration, setting forth his tender affection to his subjects, his desire of satisfying their wishes, the complete return of his favour, and his determination to give the Low Countries most convincing proofs of his benevolence and confidence. Flagrant as the duplicity of these professions were, their uselessness was no less obvious; force, not deception was his instrument of government; the soldiers could not the more easily massacre one man by proclaiming to him the *tender feelings* of their employers: it was a mere waste of falsehood, which could answer none of the assertor's purposes; more resembling the capricious versatility of a froward child, than the steady policy of a firm man, resolute in wicked designs.

The interpreter of the emperor's tenderness was Dalton: among the sources of Dalton's fame acquired in Transylvania was a *gallows** of an extraordinary height for hanging insurgents, and he declared his determination to erect an edifice of a like construction in the great square at Brussels. He now went to establish at Louvain the new professors of divinity; and to reform the errors of theological schools, the argument employed was the bayonet: the rector and professors were ejected by a file of musqueteers, and the new teachers were established by the same authority. To celebrate the admission of the imperial instructors in theology, the soldiers murdered a great number of the inhabitants*, who could not refrain from assembling to pay the last tribute of grief at the overthrow of an institution, which had for so many ages been the pride and support of their city. But although soldiers could inaugurate persons appointed to *teach* the christian system according to the imperial canons of orthodoxy, they could not compel students to *learn*: the pupils had universally abandoned the colleges, and the masters were left to deliver their lessons, either in empty halls, or without any hearers, but their military co-adjutors. At Malines and Antwerp the massacre was much more extensive than even at Louvain; and personal security was deemed so precarious in the Netherlands, that some of the nobility, and a great number of other inhabitants of distinction and property sought refuge in exile. The

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Effects of
of his ty-
ranny.

* Annual Register 1789, chap. 2.

† Annual Register 1789, chap. 2.

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cruel executions committed upon a defenceless people by their rulers, in a season of peace and most profound tranquillity, excited the abhorrence of the neighbouring nations, and procured asylums for the unfortunate sufferers. Confiscation, despotism, and military execution being once established, property, liberty, and life being insecure, those that still remained in the country withdrew their capitals from manufactures and commerce, and vested them in foreign funds, as a provision for their own flights, and repositories which Dalton's bayonets could not reach. In a country so recently eminent for industry and the arts, trade was entirely stagnant, and every occupation ceased, except those which minister to the necessity of life: revenue proportionably declined; fiscal productiveness, the great object of the emperor's tyranny, experienced a most important diminution: the states of Brabant announced a determination, under the present outrageous tyranny, to withhold the supplies. Such was the state of affairs at the close of 1788.

Farther cruelty and robbery by Joseph.

The emperor published an edict, annulling all his former concessions, even recalling his inaugural oath to maintain the Joyous Entry; and all the obnoxious establishments of 1787 were to be speedily restored. The grand council of Brabant having refused to sanction so despotic an edict, that constitutional tribunal was suppressed; the management of the revenue, which had formed one of its delegated departments, was vested in a commission nominated by the emperor: no abbots were thenceforth to be appointed in Brabant, and thus the clerical order was about to be suppressed; the commons

mons were to be new-modelled, according to the emperor's pleasure; the right of granting subsidies was to be no longer vested in the states, but in a council appointed by the emperor; the Joyous Entry was to be abolished; the whole government and all its parts were to be modelled according to the imperial will. A considerable part of the year 1789 was employed in executing these nefarious projects of infatuated ambition. The enmity to the clergy, and rapacity for money, two predominant features in the emperor's character, combined in dictating his most extensive and systematic schemes of robbery. By one decree he sequestered all the abbeys of Brabant, and appointed civil officers to manage their revenues for his use*.

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Such a seizure of property, in a country which had so long enjoyed the blessings of a free constitution, and of ecclesiastical possessions, among a people so devoutly attached to the priesthood, excited very general resentment, and open remonstrances from men, who already indignantly brooded over their fallen constitution, and meditated the re-assertion of their rights: they resolved no longer to yield even the appearance of submission, either to subordinate tyranny, or the imperial despot himself.

The Flemings resolve on forcible resistance.

* The author of Doddsley's Annual Register 1791, having attentively considered the detail of the spoliations, says, that he suppressed no less than a hundred and sixty monastic establishments, and that the only precaution he appears to have used was, that in this great suppression the men were more favoured than the women: of the male convents, only forty were sequestered; of the nunneries, one hundred and twenty.

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Stimulated to resistance by the strongest motives which can inspirit generous breasts; considering death as preferable to slavery; and recalling to their minds those gallant exertions by which a kindred people had emancipated themselves from an Austrian despot in the sixteenth century, they trusted that with much greater resources, against a foe less powerful, they would be no less successful in resisting an Austrian despot of the eighteenth*; besides their own resources, so valuable and efficacious, in the riches, population, and spirit of the people, and nature of the country, they might reasonably expect support from the arms of Prussia, and even of her maritime confederates. The emperor was engaged in the Turkish war, and his force greatly impaired by the disastrous events

* There was a considerable resemblance between the conduct of Joseph II. and his ancestor Philip II. of Spain: though the former was the professed champion of toleration, the latter of intolerance, the principle of both was much more nearly allied than would appear from a superficial view of their respective objects. Each sought to model the opinions of mankind according to his will; each endeavoured to effect his purpose by violence; each was cruel in persecuting all those who opposed his system; each was imperious and despotical: both were ambitious without ability, restless without enterprise, aggressive and usurping in intention, mighty in project, but futile in execution, and unsuccessful in event. Philip, the creature of imitation, was the implicit votary of priestcraft: Joseph, the creature of imitation, was the implicit votary of infidelity: neither of them were guided by sound reasoning and original reflection: both, in supporting their favourite tenets, and gratifying malignant passions, did much mischief; but attempted much more than their incapacity suffered them to perpetrate.

which

which it had produced: though emigration was very prevalent, yet the refugees chiefly sought shelter in the most adjacent states, and had greatly promoted the cause of their countrymen by describing the dreadful oppressions from which they had fled. With the emigrants the Flemish patriots maintained a very close correspondence, and concerted with them the plan and commencement of open resistance. Dalton, meanwhile, dispatched part of his troops to seize every person suspected of disaffection, and carried the system of proscription and murder to a more enormous extent than at any former period of his tyranny, while Trautmansdorff acted as the civil instrument of oppression. A conspiracy was formed to blow up the houses of these tyrants with gunpowder; during the confusion to seize the gates of Brussels and the arsenal, and admit bodies of emigrants, who were prepared, and to be ready at hand for that purpose: the execution of this plot was fixed for August 1789; but being discovered, a great number of suspected persons were apprehended. While the ministers were inflicting summary punishments, the vigorous proceedings of the patriots called their attention to more formidable objects. About the middle of September 1789, the duke of Ursel, and the prince of Aremburg, count of la Marck, his son, with the other nobles who had retired to Breda, were joined by the archbishop of Malines or Mechlin, primate of the catholic provinces of the Netherlands, and by most if not all the states of Brabant, both civil and ecclesiastical, were constituted and declared to be the regular and legal assembly

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assembly of the states of that province*: they framed and unanimously passed a remonstrance to the emperor, declaring their rights, and their resolutions to maintain them against every violator: they were prepared to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for a sovereign who should govern them constitutionally, but they would not surrender those privileges which they held in trust for their fellow citizens, and for posterity: they adjured him to spare them the cruel necessity of appealing to God and their swords.

The declaration of the states, so contrary to his despotic sentiments and views, highly enraged the emperor, and he gave orders for increased severity, and violence of military execution. The Belgians saw no hopes of redress, but by their swords, and in October 1789 they hoisted the standard of revolt: a body of insurgents took the two small forts of Lillo and Liefenshock on the Scheldt: in fort Lillo, besides the military stores, they found a considerable sum of money. Dalton sent general Schroeder against the invaders, at the head of four thousand troops, well disciplined. On the advance of this force the insurgents abandoned the two forts, and retreated towards Furnhout, a small town about eight miles from the forts: the imperialists pursued them to the gates, and forcing these open entered the town: the Brabanters retreating from the main street, drew the Austrians after them until they were inclosed in the market place; there the patriots firing from the adjoining houses, windows, and

* See Annual Register for 1791, p. 32.

lanes, did great execution; the regulars being thus ensnared, and unable to extricate themselves, were broken and defeated, and compelled to retreat with the loss of seven hundred men. Hope, encouraged by success, roused all the patriotic and martial ardour of the Belgians: assuming the name of the patriotic army, they penetrated into the heart of the country: in the other provinces, as well as Brabant, the votaries of freedom flocked to the standard erected for its preservation, and burned with impatience to join their brethren in the field, that they might contribute their efforts to deliver their country from foreign tyrants. In the beginning of November a battle was fought at Tirlemont: a body of patriots having been pursued by Bender an Austrian general, had taken refuge in this place, and were warmly supported by its patriotic inhabitants. Bender having entered the town, was very vigorously received by the Flemings, and after an obstinate contest compelled to retreat. The Netherlanders now ventured to meet their adversaries in the open field, and having gained a complete victory, took possession of Ostend, Bruges, and Louvain. Animated by these successes, they had the boldness to attack the strong city of Ghent: having entered the town, they assailed, and defeated the enemy in the streets; and compelled one part of them to fly for refuge to the barracks, while another sought shelter in the citadel. The third day of the siege the barracks surrendered; the defendants of the citadel finding they could no longer retain the place, committed the most infamous enormities in the streets, but soon evacuated the garrison: the defence

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defeat the
Austrian
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They form
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into a fede-
ral republic.

defence of Ghent was by no means adequate in either vigour or skill to the force by which it was guarded. Joseph, desirous of winning his soldiers, had given directions for allowing them great laxity; the troops who were in the Netherlands, besides being recently free-booters, and accustomed to trample on the defenceless inhabitants, conceived a most thorough contempt for the Flemings; but when they came to battle, and were compelled to face the enemy on equal terms, they shewed themselves to have totally deviated from the characters of Austrian soldiers, and to be as dastardly as they were profligate. The reduction of Ghent was of the greatest consequence to the Flemish patriots; and the more especially as it enabled the states of Flanders to assemble in that capital of the province, for the purpose of legalizing their public proceedings, giving a form to their intended new constitution, and concluding a league and federal union with the other provinces. The emperor informed of the great successes of the Flemish patriots, descended from his despotic haughtiness, and endeavoured by amicable promises to conciliate his late subjects; he exhorted the malcontents to lay down their arms, and to trust for the redress of real grievances to his clemency and paternal affection: dreadful consequences (he said) would ensue if they compelled him to relinquish the conquests which he was now prosecuting, and pour into the Netherlands armies that were now gathering laurels from a foreign enemy. Endeavouring partly to justify, and partly to explain his most obnoxious acts, he offered to revoke the offensive edicts, to comply with all their former demands,

mands, and to grant a general, full, and perpetual amnesty to all who should return to their duty within a specified but distant time, the leaders of the revolt alone excepted: but the Flemings had been too often deceived by Joseph to repose any confidence in his professions; and they now paid the less attention to his overtures, that from their successes they began to deem themselves no longer dependent on his power. On the twentieth of November the states of Flanders seized on the sovereign authority in their province, and, in imitation of their Dutch neighbours, assumed the title of high and mighty states: they passed resolutions, declaring the emperor to have forfeited all title to the sovereignty of the Netherlands; for raising, organising, and disciplining an army, and uniting themselves with the states of Brabant. The ardour and success of their countrymen inspired the inhabitants of Brussels with the desire and hope of rescuing their capital from the despotic ministers of Joseph. Intimidated by the victories of the Flemings, Dalton confined himself within the walls, and ordered the gates to be strictly guarded: his force consisted of about six thousand men, whereas the patriotic band did not exceed one thousand: the soldiers were, however, dispersed through different parts of the city; their adversaries were at a fixed rendezvous to form a compact body, which assailing the scattered enemy, by throwing them into partial confusion might cause general disorder, and animate the other citizens to join in the conflict. This gallant design was executed: the Flemish band defeated

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feated an Austrian detachment in one of the streets ; the battle became general, and the insurgents got possession of the barracks, with two thousand muskets, and plenty of ammunition. Dalton retreated to the great square, where, attempting to defend himself, he was obliged to capitulate, and to give up Brussels, on being allowed to escape with his garrison : he accordingly retired to Luxemburg : Trautmanndorff, with the other chief members of the government, withdrew to Liege. The governors-general, from their popularity were not afraid of any violence, yet, as the emperor's sovereignty was no longer acknowledged, they betook themselves into Germany. The Flemings, in their victories, far from imitating the brutal cruelty of the imperial despot's soldiers, killed no one but in battle. Having thus made themselves masters of the chief towns, after celebrating the most solemn institution of religion, they restored the ancient courts of justice, rescinded all the emperor's innovating edicts, settled the exercise of the sovereign power, and completely re-established tranquillity. The states of Brabant being assembled at Brussels, on the last day of the year 1789, bound themselves by oath, in the presence of the citizens, to preserve the rights, privileges, and constitution of their country, and then proceeded to administer the same oath to the members of the sovereign council of Brabant, amidst the general acclamations of the people. The other provinces, except Limburgh, having concluded similar engagements concerning their respective internal constitutions, all the Austrian Netherlands, Limburgh

burgh excepted, formed themselves into a federal republic, to be distinguished by the title of the United Belgic States. Such was the result of the restless changes, rapacity, and usurpations of the emperor Joseph.

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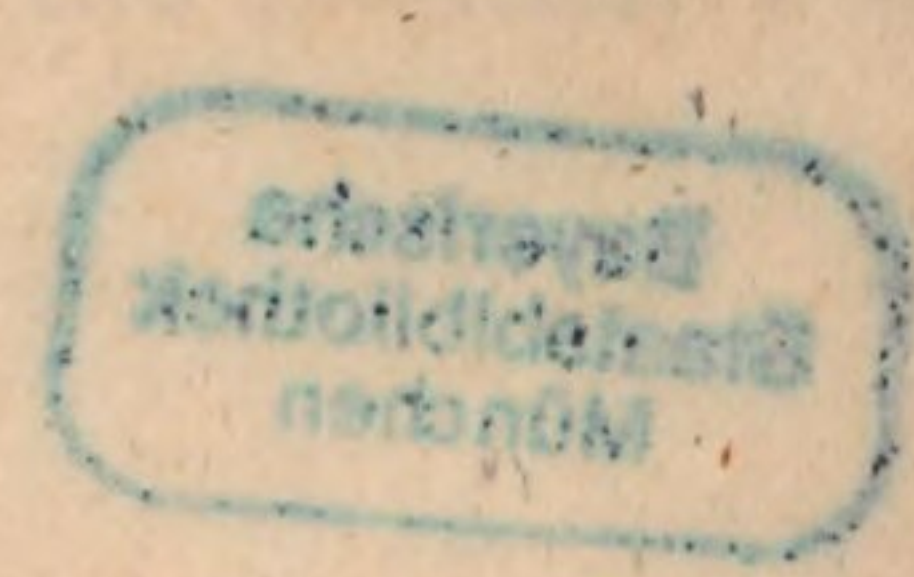
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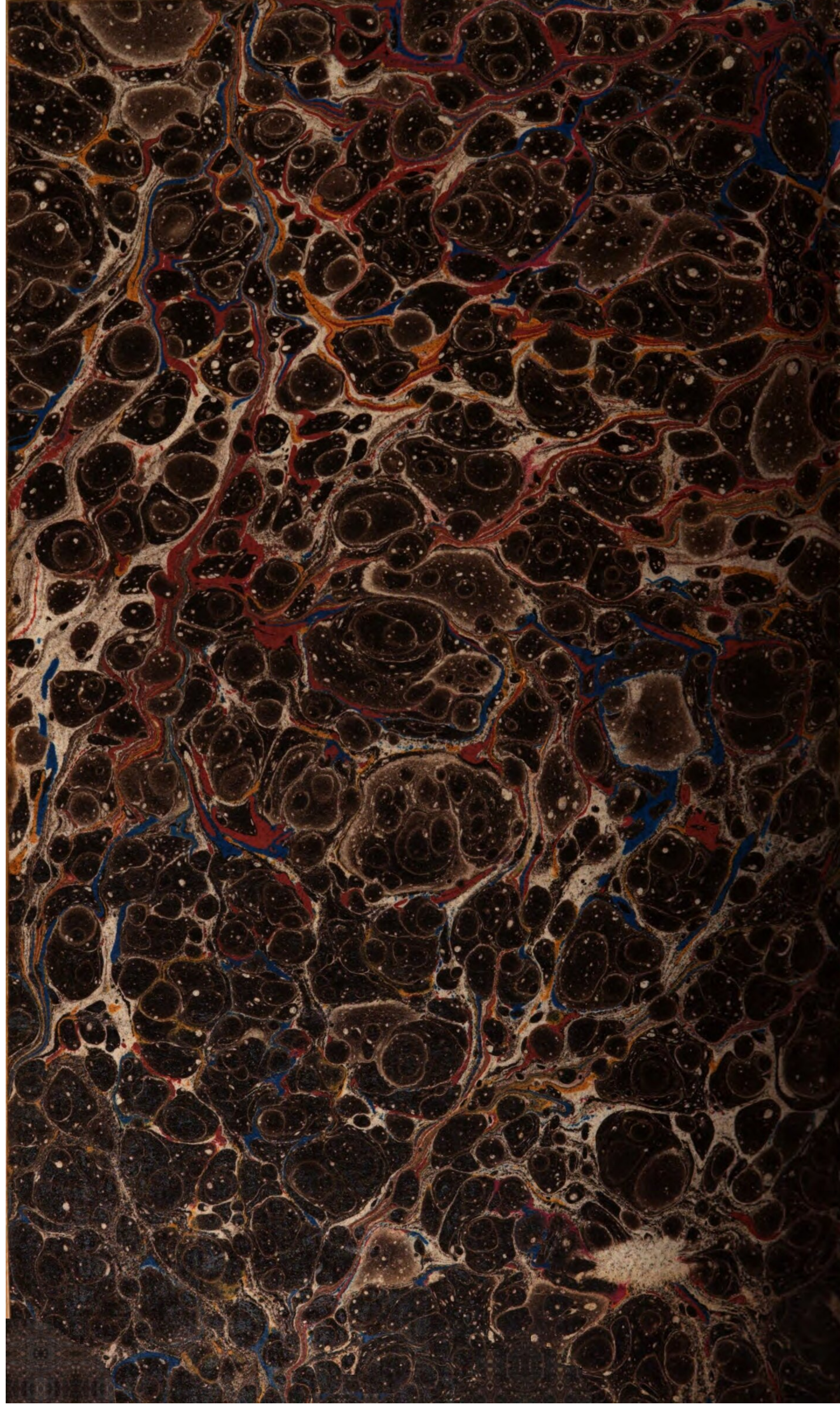
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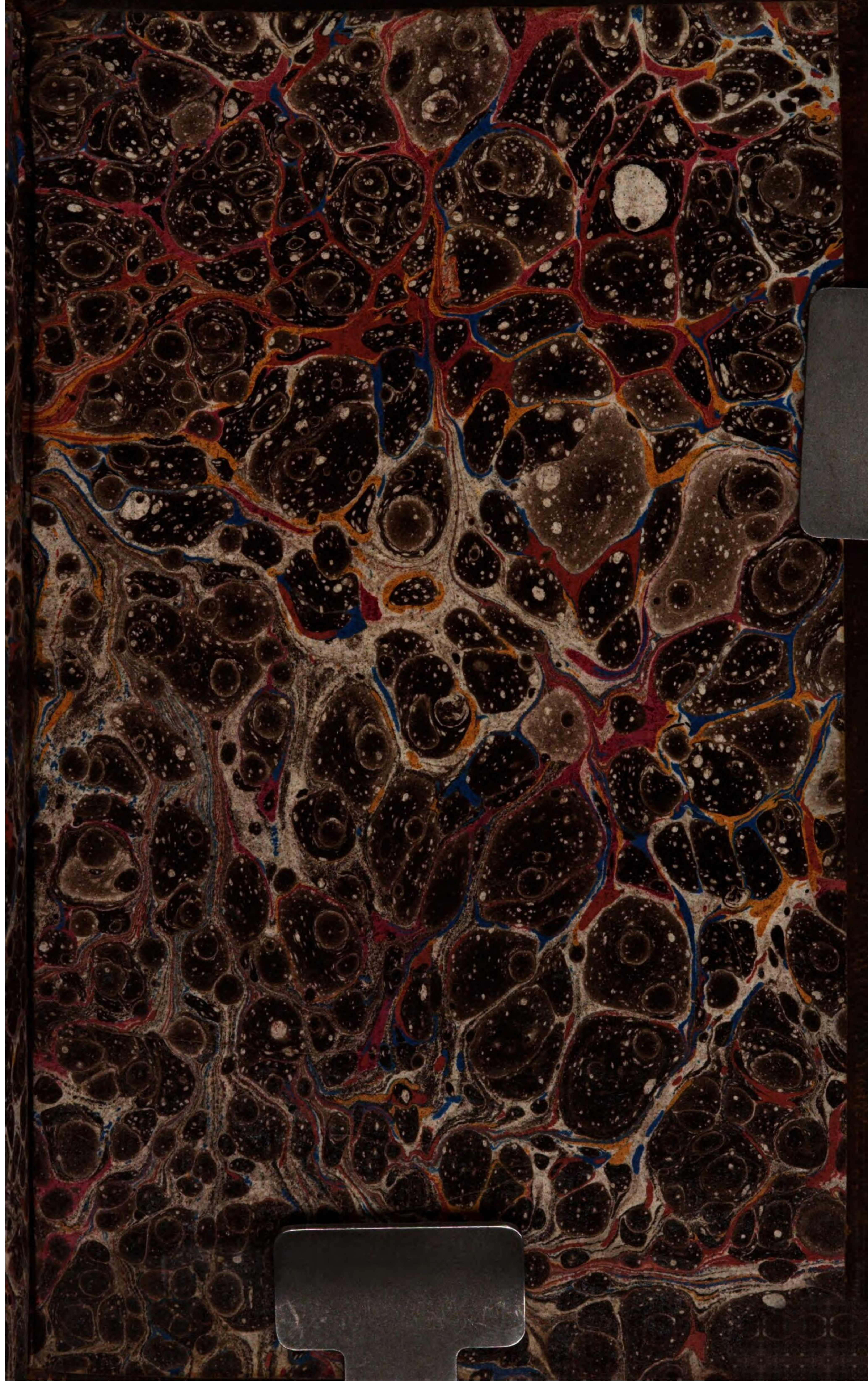


though accepted, formed themselves into a federal C. M. A. R.
republic, to be distinguished by the title of the
United Belgic States. Such was the result of
the rebellion, change of capacity, and usurpation of
the emperor Joseph.

END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.







Bisset, Robert

The history of the reign of George III. to the termination of the late war
to which is prefixed, a view of the progressive improvement of England, in
prosperity and strength, to the accession of his majesty
Bd.: 4

London 1803

Bibl.Mont. 3422-4

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